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A GRACIOUS LIFE.

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A GRACIOUS LIFE.

BEING THE LIFE OF

BARBARA ACARIE

(BLESSED MARY OF THE INCARNATION),

Of the Reformed Order of our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel.

BY

EMILY BOWLES.

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1879.

✠

TO THE CARMELITE NUNS

OF THE RUE D'ENFER IN PARIS

TRUE DAUGHTERS OF ST. TERESA

BRAVE CONSTANT AND SINGLE OF HEART

WHO OWE THEIR FOUNDATION

TO BARBARA ACARIE

THIS BOOK IS OFFERED

BY ONE WHO BEGS THEIR PRAYERS.

CONTENTS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

Barbara Avrillot.

Birth and baptism of Barbara Avrillot 3
Her parentage 4
She sees young Gallemant at Nôtre Dame de Liesse . 5
Barbara goes to school at the Abbey of Longchamp . 6
She is allowed to make her first Communion early . 7
She wishes to remain always at Longchamp . . . 8
Is taken away by Madame Avrillot 9
She asks to be allowed to be a nursing nun . . . 10
She again urges her request leaving the choice of the Order to her mother . . 11
Her submission to her mother's absolute refusal . . . 12
Madame Avrillot treats her with great harshness . . 13
Barbara patiently submits to hardship and ill treatment . 14

CHAPTER II.

Barbara Married.

Madame Avrillot chooses Pierre Acarie as her child's husband 15
Pierre Acarie's parentage and bringing up . . . 16
Wishes to be a priest but studies for the bar at his mother's wish . . . 17
Barbara is married and conforms to her husband's tastes 18
She cannot help expressing her dislike to dress and fashion 19
She regulates her life and takes opportunities of self-denial . 20
She makes her maid Andrée her admonitress . . . 21
M. Bochart warns her not to fall into singularities . . 22
She falls into the snare of reading foolish books, and is cured 23
She makes great use of her spiritual books . . . 24
She steadily applies herself to make spiritual progress . 25

CHAPTER III.

Looking Life in the Face.

Madame Acarie sees her husband's danger from the League 26
M. Acarie is banished from Paris by Henry IV. . . 27
Madame Acarie is reduced to the utmost poverty . . 28
Her relations advise her to separate her fortune from her husband's . . . 29

PAGE

She goes to live with Madame de Bérulle 30
She follows her suit from court to court 31
She gains her suit just as M. Acarie is carried off by Leaguers 32
He is ransomed and removed to Luzarches 33
Madame Acarie courageously faces an adventure . . 34

CHAPTER IV.
The Hôtel Acarie.

The Hôtel Acarie in the Rue des Juifs 35
Madame Acarie returns to the Hôtel Acarie with her six children 36
They are carefully trained in the love of holy things . 37
Madame Acarie insists on the strictest regard to truth . 38
She accustoms them to a full acknowledgment of faults . 39
And to a constant renouncement of their self-will . . 40
And to mortify their appetite for food and dress . . 41
She gives them a rule of life . 42
And arranges for genuine recreation and play . . 43
Their religious duties and catechism 44
The three girls make their first Communion early in life . 45
The prevention of evil Madame Acarie's constant aim . 46
Madame Acarie never a hard or exacting mother . . 47
When her girls grow up she leaves them free to choose their state 48

PAGE

She is anxious that their vocation should be genuine . 49
She advises her son Nicholas not to enter the army . . 50
Pierre Acarie becomes a priest 51
Jean Acarie leaves the ecclesiastical state and marries . 52
St. Francis de Sales comforts Madame Acarie as to her sons 53

CHAPTER V.
Service at Home.

Madame Acarie watches her servants as she does her children 54
She herself nurses them in infectious sickness . . . 56
The Hôtel Acarie is said to be like a convent . . . 57
Many of the servants become friars and nuns . . . 58

CHAPTER VI.
Work out of doors.

Madame Acarie undertakes good works in Paris . . 59
She never refuses any kind of work of charity . . . 60
During the famine she feeds crowds of people . . 61
She spends hours in the Hospitals of St. Gervais and the Hôtel Dieu . . . 62
She becomes the idol of the soldiers at St. Gervais . 63
She gives counsel to many and reconciles Catholics to the Church 64
She becomes the apostle of fallen women and girls . 65
She undertakes the difficult work of reforming relaxed convents 66

PAGE

CHAPTER VII.

Friends and Guides.

Madame Acarie's numerous guides and friends . . 68
Father Canfeld and André du Val 69
M. du Val buried in the convent at Pontoise . . . 70
Dom Beaucousin the Carthusian, and M. Gallemant . 71
St. Francis de Sales at one time directs Madame Acarie . 72
M. de Marillac, the Keeper of the Seals 73
St. Francis de Sales speaks of Madame Acarie at Lyons . 74
M. de Bérulle the Founder of the French Oratory . . 76
His friendship with Madame Acarie 77
Madame de Bérulle and Madame de Meignelay . 78
Strange intermingling of good and evil in the French families 79
Madame de Ste. Beuve and Madame de Bréauté . .

CHAPTER VIII.

A Brave Heart.

Madame Acarie's treatment of herself as to food . . 82
Her mortification as to sleep and bodily austerities . 83
She breaks her thigh in returning from Luzarches . . 84
Her sufferings while the bone was being set . . . 85
The thigh-bone never again remains long in its place . 86
The masculine character of Madame Acarie's devotion . 87
Her knowledge of the Scriptures and Psalms . . 88

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

Preparing the Ground.

The Origin of the Carmelite Order 91
Carmelite convents for women in the time of Blessed John of Soreth 92
Divergence of the French Carmelites 93
M. de Brétigny in Spain as a boy studies the Carmelite Order 95
By the help of the Maréchale de Joyeuse, obtains leave for Spanish nuns to go to France 96
Many influences join towards bringing the Carmelite nuns to France 97
M. Gallemant proposes to graft the rule upon his Congregation and to employ Dominicanesses to carry it out 98
M. de Brétigny collects St. Teresa's rules and writings 99
St. Teresa appears for the first time to Madame Acarie, who consults Dom Beaucousin 100
St. Teresa appears to Madame Acarie the second time . 101
St. Francis de Sales joins the consultors in Dom Beaucousin's room . . . 102
St. Francis de Sales asks for a Bull for the French Foundation 103

PAGE

The three Superiors chosen are MM. Gallemant, du Val, and de Bérulle . . . 104
The Priory of Nôtre Dame des Champs fixed upon to be the first convent . . 105
Pope Clement VIII. grants the Bull, and the priory is made over to M. de Marillac 107

CHAPTER II.

Preparing the Plants.

The 'noviceship' in the Hôtel Acarie . . . 108
M. Acarie delights in distracting the 'novices' . . 109
The Duchess de Longueville buys them a house in the Place Ste. Geneviève . . 110
Madame Jourdain is chosen Superior of the Congregation 111
Madame Acarie carefully sifts those who offer themselves as postulants . . . 112
Mademoiselle de Brissac is examined by Madame Acarie 113
Marshal de Brissac finally gives his consent to his daughter's vocation . . 114

CHAPTER III.

Nôtre Dame des Champs.

The position and aspect of the priory of Nôtre Dame des Champs . . . 115
The crypt the first hermitage of St. Denis . . . 116
The priory is pulled down and new buildings begun . 117

PAGE

St. Teresa appears to Madame Acarie the third time at St. Nicholas du Port . . . 118
It is made known to her that she is to be a lay-sister . 119
M. de Marillac and Madame Acarie overlook the buildings 120
M. Acarie sometimes forbids her to go to Nôtre Dame des Champs . . . 121
Singular faith of Madame Acarie when money runs short 122
Suit against Madame Acarie on various vexatious grounds 123
St. Teresa appears to her for the fourth time . . . 124

CHAPTER IV.

From France to Spain.

Madame Jourdain offers to go to Spain for the nuns . 125
M. de Brétigny and M. Gauthier beg M. de Bérulle to join them 126
M. de Bérulle reluctantly starts for Spain with M. Gauthier 127
They reach Burgos and see Mother Thomasine Baptist 128
They arrive at Valladolid and are welcomed by the whole party 129
M. de Bérulle sees the Nuncio who tells him the Carmelite Fathers are adverse . . 130
He goes to Madrid and visits the General of the Carmelites 131
M. Gauthier shows the Brief, and asks for Mother Mary of St. Joseph . . . 132

PAGE

The Nuncio threatens Father Francis with excommunication 133
Father Francis treats M. de Bérulle very badly . . 134
Several Carmelite Fathers take M. de Bérulle's part . . 135
Imputations thrown out against M. de Bérulle's faith 136
His persistence in hope and prayer 137
He makes a second pilgrimage to St. Teresa's tomb . . 138
The Nuncio sends a messenger with powers to depose Father Francis . . . 139
M. de Bérulle has leave to take the nuns away . . 140

CHAPTER V.

From Spain to France.

M. de Bérulle sees Mother Anne of Jesus at Salamanca 141
He sees Mother Isabel, and tells her she is to go to France 142
Mother Beatrice asks to go to France 143
Mother Anne asks that the Carmelite Fathers may go part of the way . . . 144
The whole party leaves Salamanca in the night . . 145
The little band in great joy come to Avila . . . 146
And are lodged in and near St. Joseph's Convent . 147
They see Julian d'Avila, St. Teresa's confessor . . 148

PAGE

Father Francis joins them to take leave of the nuns . 149
They journey on, and suffer the want of food . . 150
Father Joseph, the Provincial, makes himself unpleasant . 151
He obliges M. de Bérulle to lay down money for the nuns' return . . . 152
The nuns and Madame Jourdain suffer very much . 153
Mother Anne shows her heroic courage . . . 154
Madame Jourdain bravely bears her sufferings . . 155
M. de Bérulle surprises the nuns by his politeness . 156
The nuns are wonderfully preserved in an accident . 157
Great rejoicings of the townspeople as they pass . . 158
The virtues of the whole party displayed 159
The ideas the nuns entertained of the state of France 160
They come to the Bidassoa, the boundary between Spain and France . . . 161
The supernatural presence of St. Teresa discerned . . 162
Father Joseph's desperate state of mind . . . 163
The nuns entering Bayonne are again wonderfully preserved 164
Father Joseph takes leave, and the party enter Bordeaux 165
M. de Bérulle hastens forward to the Court at Fontainebleau 166

BOOK THE THIRD.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

Paris and Nôtre Dame de Champs again.

The nuns at the Abbey of Nôtre Dame at Saintes . 169
From Saintes through Orleans to Paris 170
They go immediately to St. Denis to offer thanksgiving 171
Madame Acarie, overjoyed, is enjoined silence by Andrée 172
Mass and Communion at St. Denis 173
The Princesses install the nuns in the temporary convent . 174
M. de Bérulle falls very ill . 175
Cardinal de Gondy refuses to bless the house . . . 176
He relents, and gives it the title of the 'Incarnation' . 177

CHAPTER II.

The First Grafts.

The three Superiors propose the novices who are prepared 178
Madame Jourdain, Mdlle. d'Hannivel, and Andrée Levoix are chosen . . 179
The Catalan Provincial's sermon 180
Madame Acarie is obliged to act as Novice Mistress . 181
The inconveniences of the noviceship as to lodging and food 182
The Spanish dishes repugnant to the French novices 183
Mdlle. Fonteine's difficulty in leaving her home . . 184
She succeeds in going to the Convent 185
Madame de Bréauté also enters the noviceship . 186
Fervour of the new novices . 187
M. de Bérulle is appointed their confessor . . . 188
Exceeding austerity of the life 189
Their happiness and peace of soul 190

CHAPTER III.

The Spanish Prioress.

Mother Anne's early years and vow at ten years old . 191
She clothes herself in the consecrated habit . . . 192
St. Teresa makes her welcome as her companion . . 193
Mother Anne's journey to Avila 194
She is made Novice Mistress at Salamanca . . 195
Mother Anne receives the testimony of St. Teresa . 196
She is to be the Eliseus of the Reformed Carmelites . 197
Her character marked by over-severity 198
The unusual mingling of adoration and labour . 199
Her difficulties with M. Bérulle 200

CHAPTER IV.

'Mademoiselle Acarie' a Novice.

Madame Acarie still Novice Mistress. Her direction . 201
Her toil to ground the novices in humility . . . 202

PAGE

She is much troubled herself at being praised . . 203
She avoids relating her part in the Foundation in France 204
The first to die at Nôtre Dame des Champs is Andrée 205
Margaret Acarie becomes a Carmelite nun . . . 206
Geneviève follows her into the noviceship . . . 207
Marie, the eldest daughter enters the noviceship the last 208

CHAPTER V.

First Swarms. Pontoise.

M. du Val offers the nuns a house at Pontoise . . 209
M. de Marillac goes to superintend the buildings . . 210
Mother Anne of Bartholomew, the lay-sister, chosen Superior 211
Madame Acarie goes to Pontoise with the nuns . . 212
St. Teresa's presence is again made known . . . 213
The whole convent at Nôtre Dame des Champs ready . 214
Mother Anne goes to found a house at Dijon . . . 215
The house solemnly dedicated to St. Joseph . . . 216
Mother Isabel Prioress at Amiens. She refuses to leave France . . . 217
The house at Amiens assisted by Madame Acarie . . 218
Foundations at Tours and Rouen planted by her . 219
Madame de Ste. Beuve helps to found the Ursulines . 220

PAGE

CHAPTER VI.

Sister Mary.

Madame Acarie cured in sickness by St. Teresa's cloak . 221
M. Acarie receives the last sacraments . . . 222
Madame Acarie desires to enter the Carmelite Order . 223
She asks to be received as a lay-sister. Difficulties . 224
It is decided that Madame Acarie should enter at Amiens 225
The Prioress and whole community receive her at the door 226
She goes into the kitchen, and works without help . 227
Madame Acarie receives the habit as Sister Mary of the Incarnation . . . 228
At the prostration she falls into ecstasy . . . 229

CHAPTER VII.

Within the Grating.

Sister Mary pursues her hidden life of contemplation and work 230
She is told to work with more moderation . . . 231
Her great spirit of poverty in its extent 232
Her normal state begins to be ecstatic contemplation . 233
She receives the gifts of discerning supernatural music and fragrance . . . 234
She exaggerates her unfitness for making her vows . . 235
She makes her profession 'until death' . . . 236

PAGE

CHAPTER VIII.

'Until Death.'

Sister Mary receives the last sacraments 237
Waiting for death, she discerns the thoughts of a nun 238
The Prioress commands her to ask for her recovery . 239
She is chosen Prioress of Amiens, but is allowed to refuse 248
She is removed to Pontoise, and begins new buildings 241
She is consulted by numbers of eminent people . . 242
She opposes M. de Bérulle's innovations 243
M. de Bérulle obstinately maintains his views . . 244
He treats Sister Mary with great harshness at their final interview 245
Sister Mary's long agony and sufferings before death . 246
It is made known to M. du Val that her blessed soul is in Heaven 247
The extraordinary devotion of the people of Pontoise . 248
Office said for Sister Mary as for a Prioress 249
Her grave becomes a shrine . 250
Sister Mary appears to the Prioress of Dieppe . . 251
Pope Urban VIII. decrees that no steps towards veneration should be taken for fifty years after death . 252
Decree of beatification by Pius VI. Recovery of the body 253

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.—Barbara Avrillot 3
CHAPTER II.—Barbara married 15
CHAPTER III.—Looking Life in the Face 26
CHAPTER IV.—The Hotel Acarie 32
CHAPTER V.—Service at Home 52
CHAPTER VI.—Work out of doors 57
CHAPTER VII.—Friends and Guides 68
CHAPTER VIII.—A Brave Heart 81

CHAPTER I.

Barbara Avrillot.

DURING one of the lulls of pure exhaustion, rather than of peace, that interrupted the terrible wars of the League, a gleam of brightness breaks out in a life quite hidden from the outside stormy world. In the year 1566, while the whole Court of Charles IX. was masking at Bayonne in great splendour, and the Queen-mother, Catharine de' Medici, and the Duke of Alba were in close consultation together, a little scene was acting in Paris, of which but few of the dwellers in its dark crooked streets and under its steep towering rooftops, took the smallest heed. A little girl, to whom was given the name of Barbara (Barbe), was baptized one February morning of that year, in the quaint old parish church of St. Merry, by the Curé, and as several little sons had been born to her parents who had died, there was great rejoicing over the healthy state of this newly-given infant, and she was solemnly consecrated to the Blessed Virgin for seven years. Nicholas Avrillot, Barbara's father, was

of an old family of Bar, in Lorraine, distinguished for generations among the legal notabilities of France, and after filling the post of Master of Accounts in the Paris Chamber, he had been made Chancellor to Margaret of Valois on her marriage with the King of Navarre. He was also Lord of Champlatreux, near Luzarches. His wife, Marie Lhuillier, was also of a legal family, of whom there are honourable records in the Parliamentary rolls of Paris as far back as 1357. They were both possessed of considerable wealth, and until Nicholas entered, heart and soul, into the League, and spent in its cause all that he was worth, they lived in as much comfort as the circumstances of the times permitted. They also recorded of themselves that no member of their family on either side had any leaning towards the new religious opinions of the day.

Little Barbara Avrillot throve vigorously after her consecration, and was never known in those early years to be otherwise than a healthy, active child. When her seventh birthday had been safely reached, and the term of her consecration had run out, Madame Avrillot took her to the well-known Sanctuary of Notre Dame de Liesse, where, according to custom, all her garments of consecration were bestowed upon an orphan child. It is on record

that some years before that, when Barbara had been taken up by her mother to another famous church, that of the Carthusians in Paris, she had there been seen by a boy of ten years old, who was studying at one of the University Colleges. This boy, whose name was Gallemant, received at the same time a distinct intimation that the little girl he saw kneeling there with her mother would one day become an eminent servant of God, and that he himself would be an instrument in helping her to do great things for religion. From that day forward, without even knowing her name, he always prayed that the child might answer to the graces given her.

Barbara Avrillot was never one of those forward self-willed children who win their way to goodness through great obstacles and difficulties, and her story and example therefore may be thought a little discouraging by that greater number of persons who are driven to achieve holiness of life by much and hard warfare. But every diversity of character yields its own separate and special instruction when dwelt upon as a study. From her earliest childhood, Barbara was sweet, gentle, self controlled, and very docile, though she was firm as a rock when invited to do anything that was the least wrong, or that had been forbidden. Madame Avrillot sent her little girl to be educated at the Abbey of Longchamp,

belonging either to the Poor Clares in some mitigated form, or possibly to another branch of the Franciscan Order.[1] Her aunt, Elisabeth Lhuillier, was a nun there, and the school seems to have been rather celebrated for the piety and good training of its pupils. The community were delighted with Barbara and her devout little figure at the Office,[2] and her sweet modest manners and obedience to her mistresses won all hearts. Her companions loved her for her unselfishness and quick sympathy, for she was always ready to help or comfort any of her school-mates in disgrace or trouble.

When Barbara was not more than twelve years old, she had already deeply impressed upon her own mind a maxim which stood her in good stead through life, and was continually on her lips: 'It is never worth while to be very keen about anything that does not directly concern God's glory.' This principle sank so deeply into her mind, that petty slights, vexations, and disappointments never upset or irritated her. Or, as we should say in common phrase, it was scarcely possible ever to put her out. Thus, by degrees, the little Avrillot gained that

[1] L'Abbaye de Longchamp de Ste. Claire.

[2] The pupils at Longchamp, both in this and the next century, seem to have been present when the nuns recited their Office.

singular evenness and self-control, which in after life seemed to surround her with an atmosphere of perpetual calm. Still, there seems to have been no passiveness or indifference in her character, and she was so alive to the necessity of subjugation, that if she had committed a fault, she would go instantly to tell it to her mistresses, and beg to be punished. The chief mistress at Longchamp, and the Franciscan friar who heard the child's confessions, took great pains with her, being convinced that a disposition so gifted was well worth the trouble of unusual cultivation.

It was not common at that time to allow children to make their first Communion till they were fifteen or sixteen years old, but Barbara showed so much practical knowledge of religion, that she was admitted as a communicant at the age of twelve. When told at the beginning of Lent of the privilege to be granted her at Easter, she prepared for it with the most touching fervour and humility. She made a full and lowly general confession of her little life and childish faults, and the nuns were obliged to maintain a strict watch lest she should injure herself with fasting from food, exposure to cold, and other severe acts of voluntary penance. Barbara had no thoughts to spare for her frock, veil, and wreath, or any other such outward adornment as children

are pleased with, on the day of her first Communion. Her whole soul was absorbed in the priceless gift bestowed upon her young years, and by the earnest love of Him Who now had sealed her as His own. Often in after life she would let fall a word or two to her children of the exceeding happiness she had enjoyed on that day, and the more than earthly gladness and peace that flooded her soul. Again and again she would tell them that all the pleasures this world could heap up were not to be named with the delight she had then experienced. Again and again, too, when she heard arguments brought forward against Communion at an early age, Barbara would dwell upon the unspeakable blessing of first receiving that great Sacrament before the innocent heart had been beguiled by the false sweetness of dangerous or frivolous pleasure.

It was only in the natural course of things that the nuns of Longchamp should wish to keep Barbara always with them, and that she should wish to remain where she had truly learnt to love God. She loved even the very stones of the gray walls of Longchamp, the long cloisters, the wide schoolrooms, and above all, the church, where she had so often found a haven and refuge of peace. For it is recorded that the nuns had been in the habit of taking the gentle meek-eyed little girl apart, when they would ask her

questions upon spiritual subjects, and draw out her intelligence upon matters not often dwelt upon by children. And her answers and remarks are said to have been thoughtful and solid beyond her years, full of the goodness and ripeness of virtue which are only the fruit of grace sustained by prayer. It was almost impossible, therefore, for the nuns not to wish Barbara to remain altogether in the community to which she was so strongly attached. But Madame Avrillot, who though an excellent woman, was perhaps not capable of appreciating the higher spiritual aspirations of the soul, or possibly not able to make the uncommon sacrifice, was by no means willing to give up her only child. Without giving either the nuns or Barbara an idea of her intention, she suddenly appeared at Longchamp one day and took her child away, and, although Barbara was only then a girl of fourteen, she was never sent to school any more. This sudden recall from her beloved convent and the love of the nuns, who had been her best friends, and all her companions, cost Barbara many bitter tears, though obedience to her parents' wishes was the second great law of her life. She did not, however, throw up any of the religious habits she had adopted at school, but minutely fulfilled her duties of prayer and reading the Scriptures, in which she felt special delight; and she drew up for her

own use a little selection of the texts which had struck her the most forcibly in her daily reading. One day, while praying fervently, she had a kind of interior vision of being borne away to some lofty height, from which she looked down upon the world and all its delights rolling away from her like a tiny globe; and she afterwards acknowledged to Mademoiselle de Marillac, that 'from her early youth, even, all earthly things seemed to be put under her feet.'

Barbara had not been very long at home when her desire for conventual life grew stronger than ever, and she asked her mother to allow her to join the Nursing Nuns, probably Augustinians, at the Great Hospital of St. Louis, the Hotel Dieu. She had a great gift for visiting and nursing the sick, and she also thought that at the Hotel Dieu, which received all sorts of cases, there would be ample opportunities of controlling and checking her fastidious tastes and dislikes. Madame Avrillot was not at all pleased at this request, for as she had but this one daughter, who was already much admired in her young modest bloom, her chief desire now was to see her well married and settled near her in Paris. Nor must this good mother be looked upon as in any way worthy of blame, or stigmatized as worldly in her desire to see her daughter well settled in a safe home; for, at that time there existed what her

historian, the saintly Curé of St. Merry, calls 'a lawful prejudice' against convents, on account of the loose worldly habits into which many of the French religious houses had fallen.

Barbara Avrillot does not seem to have been much disheartened at her mother's repugnance to her entering the Hôtel Dieu community, whose work, as St. Vincent de Paul in the next century found, seemed coarse and repulsive to a fastidious Paris lady. She merely gave double her usual time to prayer and devout acts of penance, and after some time had elapsed, renewed her request in a fresh shape, offering her mother the choice of any convent or mode of conventual life that she liked to point out if she would allow her to go. But even that prayer was not granted. Madame Avrillot would not hear of Barbara being a nun under any shape, and with much irritation at her persistence, she forbade her to speak or even think of it any more, and ordered her to be ready to accept any marriage that her parents might think suitable for her. This was a terribly severe blow to Barbara, for besides disliking the idea of marriage in itself, she thought herself profoundly unfit for its great responsibilities. Still, she received her mother's commands with perfect submission, neither resisting her wishes nor remonstrating in any way, and controlling all her

own feelings, offered herself cheerfully to obey in whatever her mother should think fit to propose. And, what is perhaps even more rarely seen when the inclinations are directly thwarted, Barbara was not discouraged nor cast down by the overthrow of all her cherished hopes. For experience with imperfect characters often shows that when a desire for religious life is rudely opposed, some deterioration of character follows. There is a either a rebound to frivolous pleasure, or a more uncontrolled exercise of will, or some ill-assorted marriage is rushed into, which opens the way to more incurable evils and mistakes in life.

Nothing of this kind was seen in Barbara Avrillot. Her sweetness and submission had no root of weakness in them, and she knew that God's will was infinitely more likely to be found by obeying her mother's wishes than by insisting on carrying out her own. And, more than this, she believed that His more intimate plans and guidance would open out to her exactly in proportion to the fulness of her own sacrifice. For Barbara knew that His children while on earth as well as in Heaven have already entered into the possession of eternity; and they thus do His will in full security, knowing that with Him a thousand years are as one day. She therefore renewed her purpose of an earnest and devoted life,

and went peacefully on, following her hours of reading and prayer exactly as when at Longchamp, and spending her days in a succession of useful occupations. As far as her mother permitted her to do it, she also withdrew from the the gay society among which her parents lived, and shed many tears in secret when she was obliged to dress and go into company. For some time her reluctance was allowed to pass without notice, or only treated as mere girlish shyness. Madame Avrillot also sometimes rallied her pleasantly on her 'excessive piety,' hoping that the fancy of living as a *dévote* would pass away and wear itself out when the pleasures of the world had been fully tasted.

It sounds strangely to us now, knowing that Madame Avrillot was a good, and in many respects, what would commonly be called a pious woman, that she should have shown so strong a dislike to her daughter's solid and active piety. When it became evident that no worldly pleasure could draw Barbara away from her love of prayer, and that her desire for a hidden life with the poor was increasing instead of proving itself to be a transient girl's fancy, Madame Avrillot took alarm lest her child's tastes should prevent her from making what she called a suitable marriage. She began to scold the girl, and treat her with great harshness, reproving her sharply

in public for the least fault, and sometimes sending her away angrily to her own room.

When she found that Barbara's patience and sweet submissiveness were never failing, Madame Avrillot lost her self-control, and even, it would seem, all ordinary feelings of a mother's kindness. She obliged Barbara, during a very hard winter, to sit without a fire, to get up and dress in the morning close to a door open to the outer air, and persisted in this cruel treatment until the poor girl's chilblains festered and inflamed to such a degree that several joints of her toes had to be amputated. This course of acute suffering Barbara bore with perfect sweetness and patience, never once complaining or murmuring about it; and accepting all her mother's harsh treatment as if it were a thing of course, and just what she desired. And there can be no doubt that however difficult we find it to explain Madame Avrillot's conduct, it had a most special influence in ripening her child's future holiness of life, and is an admirable contrast to the soft weakness of our own day. For parents now seem to think, or to act as if they thought, that pleasure, petty sensualities, and a course of trifling disobedience and independent action in childhood, are the best means of building up a noble and reliable character, and a life of Christian self-denial.

CHAPTER II.

Barbara Married.

1582—1588.

We have already said that Madame Avrillot's treatment of her daughter did not in any way interrupt the usual current of her life, and it was soon seen in a very striking way that while she imagined herself to be only carrying out her own ideas, she was in fact hastening the fulfilment of higher designs. While Madame Avrillot went about seeking here and there among the families of her friends for a 'suitable' marriage, according to the common worldly standard, for Barbara, she was led to fix upon a man well-fitted to guard and protect her in the perils of married life, as well as to help her to escape the many nets and pitfalls lurking in the corrupt society of the age.

This gentleman's name was Pierre Acarie, of much the same class and standing in the society of Paris as the Avrillots, the son of a Councillor of State, and holding also other offices under the King. Pierre too was an only child, the heir to some wealth, and looked upon with consideration as likely to be a man

of mark. By title, he was Vicomte de Villemor and Lord of Montberrault, owning those and other landed properties in Champagne. He halted a little in his walk, but otherwise is described as good-looking and well-mannered, and was certainly an upright, sincere Catholic, and a well-educated man. Though M. Acarie afterwards showed some roughness and harshness on the subject of his wife's devotions and many good works, as a boy he was certainly far above the average in the practice of religion. He was brought up at the College of Navarre, where he studied diligently, but always finding time also for reciting the Divine Office daily, as exactly as a priest, and was often seen at church, and in the rooms of such priests as were noted for more than usual piety and strictness of life. He choose as his director a well-known priest named Roussel, then popularly reckoned a very holy man, who trained the fatherless boy in abstemious and self-denying habits: and finding him generous, and given to almsdeeds rather than to spending his pocket-money on trifles and dainties, he advised him to take as his work the help of some of the many English priests whom our own Queen Elizabeth's cruelty had driven out of England to seek shelter on the continent. Among these priests, whom with his mother's help Pierre chiefly supported, was an Oxford man, Dr. Nicholson.

Such being his tastes and preferences, it is not surprising that young Acarie thought of offering himself for the priesthood. But, like Madame Avrillot, his mother objected to sacrificing her only child. In compliance therefore with her earnest wish, Pierre studied law for the Paris bar, the fame of which was then widely spread through Europe. He went to Orleans to read jurisprudence, and remained there for two years, after which his mother obtained for him a Mastership of Accounts in Paris. The frightful ravages wrought by the Calvinists on the convents and churches at Orleans, and especially the wanton destruction of much of the beautiful Cathedral, so deeply grieved and wounded Pierre Acarie, that he never lost the impressions of horror, which induced him later on to involve himself irreparably in the complexities of the League Wars. His mother's chief anxiety, after obtaining his appointment, was to find him a good wife, and as she was in her way an excellent woman, she gave large alms and caused many Masses to be said for that intention, and offered earnest prayers herself that her son might find a really Christian wife.

Even Madame Avrillot was satisfied with the wealth and honourable position which the young Master of Accounts could bestow upon her daughter, and as there were no difficulties in the way, Barbara and

Pierre were married in 1582, when all Paris rang with accounts of the charming manners, the sweet modesty, and the pure fresh beauty of 'La Belle Acarie,' the new bride of sixteen years and a half of age.[1] Barbara was at once fully taken into her new mother's heart; and Madame Acarie was so delighted with her daughter's sweet winning humility and deferent affection, that Pierre laughingly complained that she had no longer anything to say to him, and no eyes for any one but his wife. It was not long before Barbara was rallied upon her plain, shabby way of dressing, and the absence of all the piquant bright frippery of the fashions in her garments. Pierre, unfortunately, took his mother's view of the matter, and made it impossible for Barbara to turn the subject brightly aside to other things as she had done with her. When Pierre had once distinctly said that he wished his wife to dress like other ladies of her position, she instantly complied, though inwardly groaning over the waste of time and money which her fashionable raiment cost. She sometimes broke out into impatient words on such occasions, which are unlike the common talk of women who think it a 'duty' to be well dressed. 'If one could

[1] According to the singular custom established in France as indispensable where women were not of the highest rank, Barbara was always known and addressed after her marriage as 'Mademoiselle' Acarie.

only invent some kind of gown that could be put on all at once, instead of piece by piece, and with all these trimmings, necklaces, and bracelets!' 'Oh, how I wish there was some gown which could be put on in a moment!' 'If one might but have been born a village girl, and have done with all this trumpery!' Thus would she cry out, and one day, when Barbara was thus exclaiming, her mother in-law used these remarkable words: 'My child, that will come some day. It is not time to think about it yet.' In fact, Barbara was quite aware that she had inherited her own share of womanly characteristics, and that her aversion to finery was rather an instinct of grace than any natural characteristic. She once told her eldest daughter that on one occasion at this time of her life, when she had been carefully and expensively dressed for some family marriage, she had felt very much pleased at her own appearance; till, at the wedding, she had chanced to see a lady whose dress was much handsomer and more fashionable than her own, and had felt vexed and disturbed at it for a little while. But in a few minutes, God stirred her conscience to feel the folly and waste of time of her disturbance, and to recognize that if her heart and mind had been really fixed upon Him she could never have lost her peace for an instant. She had been, she said, so struck by the clearness

and force of this conviction that she escaped from all the company and went out on the garden-terrace, where she had shed many tears of deep contrition, and felt a reawakened desire to give herself and her whole life to God's service.

From that turning-point in her life, in fact, Barbara was so bent upon fulfilling and enlarging her circle of duties in a single-eyed manner that she began to make rapid spiritual progress. She seldom left the house except to go to their own parish Church of St. Gervais, or to pay such visits as her husband required, or to see some poor neighbours. Whenever she was seen in the streets, her sweet unaffected modesty, and a certain special calm and peacefulness of demeanour, impressed all who met or spoke to her. Her character was of that rare balance and unvarying goodness that little facts and traits in others which are usually picked out and fastened upon as 'disedifying,' were turned by Barbara Acarie to account and profit. One day, she went to visit some rich relation, who was keeping his bed, fancying himself very ill, and was occupying a large houseful of servants in running up and down stairs to satisfy a variety of fancied wants, while he was scolding and grumbling at them all the time. While Madame Acarie was gently pacifying him, two Franciscan friars came in to see

the sick man, and their peaceful contented faces, though coming out of the bitter wintry cold, made a strange contrast with the rich man's fretfulness in the midst of his luxuries, and led Barbara to reflect on the impotence of all earthly possessions to give happiness. In this way this wise woman, like a bee, made honey for her day even out of the common dirt and mud of the streets.

Madame Acarie's ingenuity in thus inventing means of progress in goodness led her to make use of her own maid in a way certainly not dreamt of by the generality of fashionable ladies. Andrée Levoix, a good well-disposed girl from Orleans, had come to her as a maid when she had been taken from Longchamp at fourteen, and she remained in her service throughout the whole of her married life. By a rare coincidence, both mistress and maid were equally eager in the pursuit of sanctity, and Barbara was accustomed to discourse openly with Andrée upon the state of her soul, her spiritual difficulties, and the best ways of advancing in virtue or overcoming certain faults. Sometimes the vivacity of their nature led them almost into dispute, after which they would vie with each other in little acts of humility and contrition for their fault, agreeing together to make use of certain warning

signs if either talked or laughed too loud or eagerly when other people were present.

This rare kind of emulation went so far that they adopted the practice of telling each other of any outward faults either had observed in the other during the day, when, in spite of Andrée's tearful entreaties, Madame Acarie would kneel before her maid to accuse herself and make an act of reparation. One of her relations, a Councillor of State, whose name deserves record, M. Bochart de Champigny, was of great use to Barbara in checking her tendency to run into extremes of fervour, or rather, into their demonstration. When he was supping one evening at M. Acarie's house, he observed that Barbara sent out for some coarse kitchen bread, upon which she supped, instead of eating of the dishes set before her husband and the guests, urging that they did not agree with her. When the meal was ended and he had an opportunity, M. Bochart gently reproved the young wife for her untruthful excuse about the food not suiting her; pointing out to her that all really good people made a point of avoiding singularity when in company with others, and, when there was no sin, of sharing with them whatever was placed on the table. Madame Acarie never forgot this gentle and friendly rebuke, and acted upon it throughout her married life.

Not very long after her marriage, Barbara fell into another snare, which we should have thought beforehand she would have instinctively avoided, and which threatened to wither up for a time all her growth of fervour. A worldly-minded friend lent her *Amadis of Gaul* and other more questionable romances of the day, and M. Acarie was surprised to find his wife innocently absorbed in the interest of these books without the slightest idea of their tendency, or of the dissipated distracted state of mind that they engender. This good man, seeing his wife so completely and unusually interested in her reading, went to his old friend, M. Roussel, and begged him to buy some well-written lives of saints and other solid religious books that would in some measure replace the novels, so as not to leave a total blank. M. Roussel chose his books with care, and having made them pretty and fit for a lady's table with morocco bindings and gilt edges, called and presented them himself to Madame Acarie. This fresh wholesome literature, and the kindness which procured it, at once struck the true note in Barbara's mind, and recalled her without loss of time to her 'first love.' The silly novels were banished from her house and thoughts once and for ever, and she applied herself with fresh vigour to the 'upward way.'

Two sayings, probably found in one of M. Roussel's books, made a deep impression upon her, and she made admirable use of both. One, of St. Augustine:[2] 'He is a miser, indeed, to whom God is not enough.' The other, of St. Francis of Assisi: 'We are in reality only what we are in the sight of God.' Upon this last Barbara meditated for several days, and it opened to her a new world of knowledge and thought on the emptiness of human honour and praise. The words of St. Augustine also wrought in her a change like that achieved by the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola during the first years of the Society, when, on going through them, men of the world were seen to throw up all the ordinary prizes of life, and enter the ranks as missionaries and apostles to the heathen in their own country or abroad. Madame Acarie's daughter says of her, that at that time she was rather borne along than led by the inspirations of God; that the secrets of spiritual life were abundantly laid open to her, as in all true conversions, those marvellous epochs when God Himself speaks to the soul, and no man hindereth; a new mind and a new heart were given to her, and all the braced-up and invigorated powers of her soul were bent upon serving God to the utmost of her strength.

[2] Eighth Treatise on the Epistles of St. John.

Thenceforth, in truth, Barbara Acarie 'set her face steadfastly' towards the Heavenly City without turning aside.

One of the older chroniclers of her life[3] remarks, that it is a true sign of God's love when a single word or thought can change the entire current of a life. It was the privilege of St. Paul, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. Augustine; and in these instances the single word or suggestion wrought a thorough change till death. In its degree, also, Madame Acarie's life was thus changed, for it was so penetrated by this one saying of St. Augustine that the mere recollection of it threw her at times into a trance of ecstatic delight, and she would again and again repeat: 'O my God, who could content us if not Thou? And if we are sufficient for Thee—since Thou willest only our salvation—how can it be that Thy will alone does not suffice for that?'

At this time Barbara Acarie was exactly two-and-twenty, and she had been married nearly six years.

[3] Père Hervé, an Oratorian (of the French Oratory), who published her Life in 1666.

CHAPTER III.

Looking Life in the Face.

We can now, with more clearness and fulness of knowledge, understand what Barbara Acarie's feelings must have been when her husband had thrown himself wholly into the strife and perils of the League. His course, like her father's at its first establishment in Champagne, had been clear; but as time went on, as history plainly shows, that clear light had waxed dim, and it must have been hard for a sworn Leaguer to know what was right or wrong in the complications that ensued. Every woman, whose life is holy, repeats in some degree the life of the Blessed Virgin at Nazareth; and thus whilst Barbara Acarie, with all the unfailing instincts of her soul, perceived the growing perils in her husband's career, she yet laid up her thoughts in her own heart in silence, and with far higher wisdom and knowledge than he possessed, she still obeyed the master of the house in all things, without taking upon herself to guide or reprove his doings. M. Acarie, along with the rest, had been swept along the impetuous

course of the Leaguers into open revolt against the King, and after the murder of Guise, had been chosen one of the Council of Forty to support the Duke d' Aumale, then Governor of Paris. He was so active in these services that he was stigmatized by the Calvinists as the 'Lacquey of the League.' A far more truthful testimony was rendered him by Henry himself, who said, after the siege of Paris, that M. Acarie had never allowed himself to be led into the least injustice or the slightest act of violence. This was probably the reason why, when he succeeded to the crown, and the League was finally broken up, while the other leading men were banished from France, M. Acarie was only required to leave Paris. He chose, as his place of exile, the Carthusian Monastery at Bourgfontaine, near Villers-Cotterets, and taking with him the Curé of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, who was also in disgrace on account of the League, they both led an almost monastic life. Each of them lived in a cell, fed like the community, and assisted at the Divine Office with the monks day and night.

It was a very great sorrow to Madame Acarie to be thus severed from her husband, but she was too entirely submissive to the Divine will to murmur at it. When her friends pitied her and showed perhaps an exaggerated sympathy with her loss, she

could not affect to feel as they did, but she refrained from showing how completely resigned she was to her lot, lest they should imagine that she was indifferent to her husband. Besides the dreariness of being separated from him, the evil consequences of his contributing largely to the League brought her many troubles. During the miseries of the civil war M. Acarie had never received any rent from his tenants, and as he was absent, his creditors seized upon everything they could, even the furniture of his house. His poor wife, who was then only eight-and-twenty, with six little children, was thus stripped of everything she possessed. One of her chroniclers relates that one day, when the sheriff's officers came in while they were at dinner, and seized even the dishes and plates on the table and the chairs they were sitting on, yet not a trace of impatience was seen on Madame Acarie's face. The only thing that troubled her was that among the goods carried away was a reliquary containing a martyr's hand, which she implored the officers to restore.

But although Madame Acarie's attachment to her worldly goods was small, she was soon reduced to such straits of poverty that she often actually wanted bread. She one day took a few articles of jewellery which she had left, intending to go to a relation, and ask him to buy them, or leave them in pledge, for

a little money to buy food for her children. She chanced to meet him in the street, and offering the jewels, she asked her little loan very humbly; but the hard-hearted man not only flatly refused, but abused Madame Acarie for daring to ask such a thing. The poor lady then actually went down on her knees and begged for a few pence to buy bread for her children; but the wretched man only hardened his heart the more and bade her go and apprentice her children to some shoemaker or cobbler that they might earn their own living. Even Madame Acarie's meek spirit could not bear such treatment without feeling it deeply, though she afterwards humbled herself sincerely in prayer, and commended her husband, her children, and her affairs to God, casting her whole care upon Him.

Her many rich relations, instead of helping her, advised her to get her own fortune separated from her husband's, and thus save her dowry and whatever might accrue to her for her own and her children's use, threatening to have nothing more to do with her if she refused. But to this Madame Acarie would never consent. She said that no human consideration should induce her to make any division of goods when God had bound them together, and added that she loved her husband too much not to share all his misfortunes.

Meanwhile, her condition was nearly desperate, for she could not touch a penny of her husband's rents, and besides her six little children, she had M. Avrillot, her father, on her hands, whose ruin, on account of the League, was as complete as their own. To add to her material difficulties, her husband's enemies had accused him of certain disgraceful actions, which involved not only the loss of reputation, but might even touch his life.

There was nothing for it but to look things in the face, and this Madame Acarie bravely did. She gave up her house and went to live at the Hotel Bérulle, Rue du Paradis, where Madame Bérulle, mother of the Cardinal, had her home in the Marais. These two women were strictly united both by connection and by friendship, and were always exceedingly happy together. M. Avrillot seems to have been sent to a house which M. Acarie had in Champagne; the two elder boys were placed at college; the elder girls at her own old convent at Longchamp; the two little ones were taken by a relation—thus leaving Madame Acarie free to give up her whole time and attention to retrieving her husband's affairs. She looked over all the deeds and papers, and made extracts of the necessary points with notes so clearly and forcibly setting out the justice of the case, that both counsel and judges

declared that it was impossible to add anything to her statement.

Nearly all this part of her work was done at night, and by day she was going from one court to another, to see various lawyers and to interest them in her cause. It gives a strange insight into the state of France then, to find that Madame Acarie was sent about from one 'judge,' or legal official, to another; that she sat for hours patiently waiting to see them, either in the courts, or at the doors, or in the streets, even till the moon was up, and the night far advanced. Once she was waiting thus, when one of the porters or other officials came out and said that his master was at dinner and could not see her. She begged to be allowed to wait in the courtyard, which the lacquey graciously permitted; but presently another came up to her, insolently asked what business she had there, and, actually taking her by the shoulders, put her outside the gates. Madame Acarie was noways displeased at this rude treatment, for, like a true Christian, she instantly reflected upon some fault of her own, and, recollecting that she had sometimes been impatient with the people who had been waiting for her husband, she thanked God that He had thus allowed her to suffer for the same fault. Whenever she had the opportunity while she was waiting Madame Acarie never failed to say a word or two

to the servants or other women upon religion, trust in God, or the benefits of prayer; and this, besides showing how tranquil her mind was, served also to maintain her peace.

It is pleasant to know that so much toil, and the patience and sweetness with which it was undergone, did not fail of its end. Madame Acarie gained her suit, re-established her husband's good name, and finally succeeded in retrieving a portion of her husband's property. Some of his lands and his mastership were sold, and enough was thus realized to educate their children and establish them in a modest household. Scarcely had one trouble been remitted, however, than another clouded her sky. A party of one of the many divisions of Leaguers, who were opposed to M. Acarie, sallied from the Castle of Pierrefonds and swooped down upon the Monastery at Bourgfontaine, where, finding M. Acarie walking in the cloisters, they took him prisoner and carried him off, in the hope of obtaining a ransom. The news was soon carried to Paris, where it excited the utmost interest and indignation, and all kinds of sympathy were offered to Madame Acarie. She, however, though profoundly grieved at this new disaster, was able to maintain her usual calm. Her implicit faith, in fact, sustained her so fully as to master her emotional nature, and helped

her to sustain and control others. For instance, when one of the portresses, or tourière-Sisters of the Carmelite Convent in the Rue Chapon was quite overcome with grief at the news, Madame Acarie affectionately rebuked her in these words: 'Where is your trust in God? Come, we must show more courage than this! I am going to think the matter well over, and be sure that I shall leave no means untried. If we are really to become worthy to serve God we must be detached from all things, and ready to submit to His will.'

The real gist of the matter was, as she well knew, to find the money for the ransom, for it was out of greed for gain that her husband had been carried away. Madame Acarie accordingly made proposals to the Governor of Pierrefonds that were favourably received, and as the Government were willing that M. Acarie's personal safety should now be secured, he was removed to the strong castle of Luzarches, which belonged to some of his family. Luzarches had also the advantage of being nearer to Paris, so that his wife could visit him more easily.

It was very clear that her husband's absence did not in any way incapacitate Madame Acarie from attending to either his business or her own. Her courage in venturing out into the desolate and unsafe country near Paris was indeed often remarkably called

out. She seems to have ridden or walked accompanied only by her maid Andrée whenever business called her out of Paris, and on one of these occasions the lives of both women must have been in imminent peril. Either from having missed their way or from not giving themselves time enough, they were benighted while still far from the city, and were forced to take refuge in an uninhabited house. Some passer-by warned them that this desolate-looking dwelling was said to be a haunt of thieves, but as they could not travel any farther they placed themselves under the care of God, and took refuge in a secluded room, which seemed more out of the way than the rest. The two weary women lay down to rest. They had scarcely settled themselves to sleep when a band of ruffians came clattering up the stairs, and into the very room in which they were. Happily the two women had so hidden themselves away behind the furniture and heaps of various articles that were scattered about, that the robbers did not find them out. But, as the night wore on, and the robbers spent it in deep drinking, swearing, and blasphemous songs, the feelings of the poor wanderers may be imagined. By daybreak, however, when the ruffians lay stretched about the floor in a drunken sleep, Madame Acarie and Andrée stole softly away.

CHAPTER IV.

The Hôtel Acarie.

MANY years before the time of our story, the Jews of Paris had congregated in a long, narrow street in the Faubourg St. Antoine, whose old name is lost, for it was since known, from their possession of it, by the name of Rue des Juifs. The street became marked also by another circumstance, for in one of the many League street fights of Paris the Huguenots had broken and disfigured a statue of our Lady which stood in a little quaint shrine at the angle made by the meeting of the Rue des Rosiers and the Rue des Juifs; and for many years afterwards the clergy of St. Gervais, and a multitude of their parishioners, gathered yearly on Whit Tuesday before the restored image to make reparation for the insult with acts of thanksgiving. In this narrow, picturesque old street—swept away, like so much of beautiful, ancient Paris, by the second Empire—stood a very large, rambling house, the Hôtel Acarie. It was so large—built probably with an utter disregard of the modern value of ground-rents—that

it contained within itself a chapel of its own, a very rare thing at that time; and besides giving ample accommodation to the family, M. Avrillot, and a considerable number of servants, it offered facilities for accommodating a number of other inmates, of which we shall by-and-bye have to speak. And when Madame Acarie had finally retrieved and arranged her husband's affairs, she returned to his house and sent for her children, that she might devote her whole time to their training and education.

It will soon be seen that her ideas as to this one word 'education' differed widely from those of our own day. *Education* and *bringing up* were quite separate, in her mind, from instruction and teaching. Her first thought was to 'lead out' the child's mind, gently and imperceptibly, and from the beginning, from its own natural passions and desires, and small, petty self-gratifications; secondly, to carry it upward, step by step, by helping the conquest of the lower part of the soul by the higher; or, as we should prefer to say, the conquest of the senses and inclinations by the force of the will. And at the risk of exciting some disapprobation of this thoroughly Christian mother on the score of her severity, her general plan of training must be drawn out at some length.

There were six little children, born between the

years 1584 and 1592, Nicholas, Marie, Pierre, Jehan (Jean), Marguérite, and Geneviéve, all of whose baptismal registers may be read by the curious in the registries of the old parish church of St. Gervais at Paris, together with the names of their godfathers and godmothers. They were all trained, from the earliest opening of their minds, to acknowledge the sense of God, and to reverence holy things; and while they were treated with unfailing sweetness and meekness, they were never allowed to escape correction for a fault. 'Faithfulness in little things' was Madame Acarie's unvarying practice, and her children learned more from their mother's example and face, than from words and books. Her eldest daughter, Marie, declared that from the earliest age they looked upon their mother as a saint, and they so loved her sweet gentle example that they strove which should imitate her life the most exactly. She made religion beautiful and delightful to them, first by her own loving attachment to it, and then by her own self-denial in it; for she was ready at all times to attend to them, their wants and wishes and ideas, while she fulfilled all her religious duties. She had them very early taken to church to be catechized, and one day when the curé, M. Guincestre, who had baptized almost all of them himself, was giving public instruction from the pulpit, and began,

'If I were to ask a child, "What is faith?"'—little Jean immediately uplifted his small voice and answered aloud, 'Faith is a gift of God,' and would have gone on with the sentence if his grandmother had not gently covered his mouth with her hand. At nine years old Nicholas, the eldest boy, had so perfectly learned his catechism at the Jesuits' church, then in the Rue St. Antoine, that the Fathers appointed him, as a reward, to carry the processional banner. His mother immediately entered warmly into his delight, and had a beautiful crimson silk banner made, on which was painted a picture of our Lord blessing little children. Yet, with all her loving watchful sympathy with her children, Madame Acarie repeatedly told them that she could only love them exactly in proportion as they continued to love and serve God.

One of her earliest and most deeply-impressed lessons was that the slightest approach to a falsehood would never be overlooked. 'You may lose all your own things, and break everything that belongs to me in the house,' she would say; 'and if you come honestly and tell me, I will forgive you most readily; but I will never pass over the slightest lapse in truth.' And as, in Madame Acarie's plan of bringing up, punishment meant the giving of real honest pain, she added that if she were not strong

enough herself she would send for some strong woman to hold them while they were being whipped, rather than let anything like a lie go unpunished in any of her children.

With the view of fostering in them that courageous upright mind which acts without regard to punishment, she accustomed all her little ones to go to her every night and tell her what had passed and what they had done in the day—whether they had quarrelled or been angry with each other, been self-willed or impatient in their plays and games, spoken or gone to sleep in church, been idle at their lessons, greedy at their meals, and the like. If they had quarrelled or been impatient with each other, she made them kiss and be friends, begging each other's pardon before they went to sleep. But if they had been careless or giddy in church, they were accustomed to bear being punished by some self-denial, such as being shut up alone in some room while everybody else was at dinner, or having only dry bread given them at table. They were never allowed to have anything given to them or done for them by the servants unless they said 'If you please,' and 'Thank you,' and not at all if they put on an air or tone of command; and the servants were desired to tell their mistress whenever the children forgot themselves or transgressed in this way. Once when

Madame Acarie overheard one of her little girls speak sharply to a maid, she called her and said, 'My little one, you frighten me by going on in that way. Who are you, that you should speak to anybody like that? Oh! never let me hear you do it again, it would grieve me too much.'

Even when her children were not in fault, Madame Acarie accustomed them to bear pain or disappointment without losing their self-control. Once, when one of her little girls showed a dislike to staying indoors with her mother when she wanted to go out and play, Madame Acarie did not give way to the child's natural, harmless wish, because she thought it a want of self-control. She told her, with that grave sweetness which had such an influence over them, that it was not becoming for a little girl to show that she was tired of being with her mother, or to set up her own will in opposition to hers. With the same object in view, Madame Acarie once tested Marie's obedience by telling her she must give up an expedition with some of her young friends, when she was actually dressed and in the carriage. The child's prompt and sweet compliance was so touching that her mother was perfectly satisfied with her child's docility, and bade her jump into the carriage again and set off with her companions. In this way the natural bent and impetuous energy of

her children's inclinations were trained and broken in by their mother till they became like tempered steel, fit for the finest uses. Madame Acarie was perfectly unsparing in her watchfulness of uprooting, or at least of pruning, with regard to the lower inclinations. She never allowed her children to show a preference at their meals for one dish over another, and in general gave them only one dish of meat at dinner-time, that they might have no choice. When once little Geneviéve said she disliked the meat which was served that day, she gave her no other for a whole fortnight, till the daintiness of appetite seemed really cured in the child for the rest of her life. Marguérite was very fond of fruit, but if she ate it too fast her plate was immediately taken away, or her mother would ask her to divide the fruit upon it with the others. And so, also, with their dress, which is so fertile a source of vanity, idleness, and self-satisfaction or envy among little girls. Their mother's unwearying watchfulness never allowed her three to choose one stuff or colour rather than another, and as long as they were children never asked their opinion upon the matter. She dressed them plainly, but very neatly and nicely, avoiding the reigning fashions of furbelow and frilling, and never allowed them to wear silk frocks, because silk was then only worn by the wealthiest upper class, and as an extreme luxury.

The three girls were accustomed also to wait upon and dress one another, and to do a thousand little acts for their visitors, which with the fixed class distinctions then reigning in France seemed most humbling to the demoiselles. Marie, especially, had the task allotted her of sweeping down a principal staircase at the time of day when visitors were likely to call, and this was a terrible trial to the girl at a sensitive age, and of a character which acutely felt what others remarked. At the same time Marie always acknowledged that her mother's sweet calm reasoning, and her unfailing personal example, made her quite ashamed of showing any feeling in the matter. For the same reasons of self-mortification, Madame Acarie sent one or two of her boys to the College at Pontoise, where there was a mixture of children of the middle class, poorly clad. As she intended to keep her girls at home after their return from Longchamp until their path in life was decided, Madame Acarie gave them a little rule for their time, beginning at seven o'clock in the morning when they were quite little, and when they were older at six. While the maid was dressing them, they repeated with her the seven penitential psalms, then had morning prayers and their reading, and were taken out to Mass, unless it was said in the house chapel. While hearing Mass they were accus-

tomed to kneel from the time that they were seven years old. While they were little, and more liable to inattention and bad habits in church, they were accustomed to say the Little Office of our Lady during Mass; but as they grew older they were trained to accompany it by meditating on the various acts of the Passion or Last Supper of our Lord.

After breakfast everybody in the house set immediately to work, when there was a good portion of time spent in sewing of various kinds, and none of the children were ever allowed to be idle. During meals, which their mother always took with them, she led them to speak of a variety of useful subjects, and their opinions and tone of mind were carefully cultivated by her questions and conversation. After every meal, a certain time was wisely set aside for real play, and Madame Acarie managed so well that, however busy she might be, she always joined in play with her children at that time, teaching them various games which she bought for them, and taking great pains to secure that there was not a single child who was not quite free of care and happy while at play. She always said that constraint and the want of true freedom of spirits blunt the delicacy of the mind, and that too early and too excessive seriousness in a child vanishes as quickly as it comes.

About three o'clock they all said Vespers together,

and there was some spiritual reading of a kind suited to their understanding, and after that the children were made to employ themselves again. During the afternoon, especially when she was not in good health and confined to her room, Madame Acarie would send for the elder ones in turn to speak to them of holy things; for this admirable mother knew well that, unless their thoughts were very early turned heavenward, this world and outward things would wholly engross their minds and veil eternity from them. Sometimes she would set them to catechizing each other, while she listened attentively to their answers and ideas. The two little ones were accustomed to give an account of their thoughts, small faults, and temptations during the day, and in this way they learned how to form and sift their consciences. Before the elder children went to bed part of the life of some saint was read, and then, after the usual examination of conscience, night prayers were read as the ending of their good and useful day. On Sundays and holidays the children went to Mass at the parish church, and even when they got up very early in the morning to go to confession at the Jesuits' church, Madame Acarie wished them to go to High Mass at their own parish church, for the sake of the example to others. They generally went with her to the afternoon sermon and Vespers,

and during supper they were expected to tell as much as they could remember of the afternoon.

Marie, Marguérite, and Geneviéve were all quite young when they made their first Communion, but they were most carefully prepared for it, and this careful preparation was not, as it so often is, relaxed, but was scrupulously renewed before every Communion during the succeeding years. Madame Acarie herself drew up some short, beautiful exercises before Communion for her eldest daughter, fitted to give her some insight into spiritual life, and to lessen her girlish love of dress and pleasant frivolous things,

There is no doubt that Madame Acarie never flinched from punishing her children when it was necessary, and that she was of opinion that the mere acknowledgment of faults, without any accompanying punishment, does not uproot them. Soft indulgent mothers of the present day would be scared, and perhaps scandalized, on hearing that Madame Acarie kept a rod in her room for offenders, and that she used it; but it is also on record that her children felt so sure of her spirit of justice and her love for them, that they would go and fetch the rod themselves and ask to be corrected when they had committed any graver fault, for which they were more than commonly sorry.

But the chief object of this wise mother was not

so much punishment as the prevention of evil. She knew that the company of a few ill-brought up children might undo in one hour the work of years, and she was so careful that many of her friends thought her foolishly particular as to the society with which her girls mixed. She had a particular dread of wedding-parties and gatherings, which at that day were probably objectionable in many ways, and if she foresaw some family necessity for being present at a marriage, she either frankly told her friends beforehand that she did not like such meetings for her children, or went away for the time from Paris. With the same scrupulous care, Madame Acarie watched over her boys when they were at College, and would always rather place them where the discipline was strict than the contrary. She wisely argued that a little present pleasantness in the freedom from restraint was dearly purchased by the risk of contracting idle habits, and the loss of courageous self-denial when her boys should be men. She even let it be known that she opened and read their letters, lest any evil influence should be creeping into their minds unawares; for, as it must be remembered, open and revolting vice flaunted at that time in the upper classes of French society.

As Madame Acarie was often away from home, [illegible] quently obliged to take Andrée with her,

she secured the help of a second self for her girls in Mdlle. d'Abra de Raconis, a Huguenot lady, who had been instructed and received into the Church by M. de Bérulle. This admirable lady lived seven years in the Hôtel Acarie teaching the three little girls, while herself learning the purest lessons of spiritual life from her beloved mistress. With all the minute and scrupulous cultivation of her children, Madame Acarie was never—as it might on the surface seem—a hard or over-exacting mother to them. Their own account of their childhood—which forms part of the evidence on her beatification—was, that her treatment was invariably so gentle, so reasonable, and so encouraging, that even when she punished they could not resent it, nor were ever cast down—on the contrary, that her sweet gravity seemed to urge them on and lift them up, so that the wounds of self-love touched by her rebukes were instantly healed. She required of them, invariably, prompt and willing obedience; but she never rested till her children gave her that hearty, cheerful, and affectionate obedience out of which love has cast all fear. And when she was pleased with them she was exceedingly generous in showing her satisfaction, and lavished upon them every token of affection in fulfilling their wishes. During their illnesses she invariably nursed them and sat up with them herself, was unsparing

of herself in waiting upon them, feeding them and preparing their medicines with her own hands, and inventing all kinds of relief.

Thus, hovering about them as a bird hovers about her young, setting before herself continually the truth that a Christian mother's care is the faithful type on earth of God's providence in Heaven, Madame Acarie so fulfilled her duties to her children that, after spending twenty years in a Carmelite convent, her eldest daughter left it on record 'that she had never learned anything more perfect in that convent than she had practised long before in her own mother's house.'[1]

It is comparatively easy, however, to prepare and cultivate the soil for seed, and to train sapling boughs. The real test of educating power is when the full-grown tree or ripened grain yields its due produce of cultivation, and Madame Acarie was well aware that the treatment of girls and growing youths must vary considerably from that of docile little children. When her daughters were growing up she was so anxious that no influence except of grace should urge them to choose a state of life, that she begged her friends and intimates never to speak with praise or disparagement before them, either of a conventual

[1] From notes made by her daughter, and used in evidence at the beatification of Madame Acarie.

or married state of life. To her friends' surprise, she also insisted upon their being properly and very neatly dressed, saw that they walked and carried themselves well, and that they cultivated pleasing manners. In short, this thoroughly wise mother prepared her children with admirable faithfulness for any vocation which might fall to their lot, and determined in no way to anticipate the decision of Providence as to their path of life. So delicate was her appreciation of her motherly responsibilities, that she left her girls, and especially Marie, at full liberty as to the colours and fashions of their gowns when they were growing up, thus releasing them from being injured by irritation at any restraint upon their minor tastes. Many things were recorded after her death of this prudent mother, which might furnish a lesson to some who are apt to drive their children's inclinations and colour their minds, under the false idea that they are cooperating with God's grace. When, at a later time, one of her daughters entered a convent, Madame Acarie was seen to shed many sorrowful tears, because she was afraid that she had been led to her choice rather by the persuasion of a friend than by the true call of God. 'My one ambition,' she then said, 'is that my children should be good. If they are faithful to what God sees to be best for their souls, He will surely call them to the state that is best suited

to them.' Again Marie records her words, 'that if she were a queen, and had but one child to succeed her on the throne, she would not prevent her from going into a convent, if God called her; but that if she had a hundred children, without the means of maintaining them, she would not send one of them into a convent unless she were sure of their vocation. For she should consider that, in the first case, she should be upsetting God's plans, and in the second, that she should become responsible for the ruin to religion and the loss of souls that might ensue. The call can only come from God. . . . It is better to remain in the world [ordinary life] by God's ordaining than to go into a convent out of any human considerations.'

But while leaving her children at perfect liberty as to their choice, Madame Acarie reserved to herself the right of advising when she thought their choice a wrong one; and she induced her eldest son not to enter the army on account of the almost inevitable duelling, which was then so fatally prevalent. Nicholas Acarie afterwards studied for the law, and went to live for some years in the house of his mother's friend, St. Francis de Sales, to be under the great lawyer, President Favre, with whom the holy Bishop of Geneva was intimate. Nicholas married early, but his wife's name has not been preserved. She seems

to have exercised some unfavourable influence over him, and to have given Madame Acarie from time to time great anxiety. On his marriage she gave her son a splendid bed, hung with red velvet, which was since bought back, and is preserved in the Carmelite Convent at Pontoise. Nicholas died without children.

The second son, Pierre, became a Jesuit, but left the Society after some years, and the Priory of Grammont was obtained for him. Pierre Acarie took his degree as Doctor of Theology in Paris, and became a Canon, Theologian, Archdeacon, and Vicar General of Rouen. A letter of his is preserved, written to the President Harlay in 1622, asking for a judicial examination in evidence of his mother's heroic virtues, and the miracles wrought after her death. Pierre Acarie was evidently an unusually learned, prudent, and enlightened priest. On his death he bequeathed his library to the Cathedral Chapter of Rouen, where it laid the foundation of the present Cathedral library. It became customary, thenceforth, for the Canons to dine in the library on Ascension Day, and at the after-dinner grace 'to pray for the repose of the soul of M. Pierre Acarie, the founder of this library.' Jehan or Jean Acarie also was, as we are told, ordained a priest. He was certainly a cleric, and became the Prior of Mesnil; but it is also stated that he was allowed to leave the ecclesiastical state, enter the

army, and marry. Some of his descendants still remain in or near Strasburg. It is possible that the virtual loss of their father's counsel and practical influence during their boyhood was a serious loss to his sons, and that, as is frequently the case with scrupulously conscientious mothers, Madame Acarie's careful and unfailing watchfulness succeeded better with her girls than with her sons. The bow, in their case, may have been slightly overbent, and may afterwards have been warped in an opposite direction. It is impossible now to decide how this may have been, as so much collateral knowledge is wanting to us, and the influences of the colleges at which the young Acaries were placed may have neutralized or contradicted their mother's system at home. It is certain that both Nicholas and his wife and Jean gave her considerable anxiety, and at times, even, the anguish which only a mother's heart can gauge, lest their salvation should be imperilled. This bitter trial, also, may have been allowed, to stir up Madame Acarie more earnestly to watching and wrestling in prayer, and in any case there remains to us the testimony of St. Francis de Sales about her sons, which sheds a final light of hope upon our last records of these sometime wandering sheep.

This is what he wrote to the second daughter, Marguérite, then a Carmelite Prioress, Mother Mar-

guérite of the Blessed Sacrament, with whom St. Francis kept up a correspondence of many years.

'O my God! My very dear daughter, my mother, how many blessings are poured out upon you! How faithfully should your soul respond to the sweet influences which Divine Providence has shed upon your house! . . . It is certain that I never think of your blessed mother without spiritual profit, and a thousand consolations, on seeing how her wishes have been fulfilled in her three daughters. And I hope that her three sons too, *though they linger* on the way, will receive good inspirations from Him to Whom I know that she devoted them. I had the happiness *of seeing them all* during my last visit to France [1619], *and the satisfaction of discerning in their souls signal tokens of the protection of God's Holy Spirit.*'[2]

[2] *Lettres*, t. iv. p. 454.

CHAPTER V.

Service at home.

It seems, from the accounts left us, that Madame Acarie was almost as watchful and attentive as to the interests of her servants as she was about her children. The modern idea that the sole relations between masters and servants consist in the payment of wages on the one side, and the performance of certain stereotyped duties on the other, by no means represented Madame Acarie's system of household administration. In the first place she provided abundantly for their religious duties. The whole household heard Mass every day, attended any sermons and instructions that were given in the parish church, and were in the habit of frequenting the sacraments at least once a month, and oftener when they were permitted to do so. Their general conduct and modest manners were commented upon by many eminent people of the time, and M. Gautier, who had some high legal public office, remarked that Madame Acarie's servants looked as if they had spent ten years in a convent.

While her own maid was dressing her, or while others were dressing the children, Madame Acarie was accustomed to talk to them about the various Christian virtues to be cultivated, and how to cure the common faults that stood in their way. Of an evening she would gather the servants together and talk to them in so familiar and pleasant a way of Heaven, and how to walk in the narrow way towards it, that, however tired they might be with the day's work, they felt refreshed, soothed, and ready to begin the next day's toil with fresh vigour. How different would many a household in our own time be, which at present, even under excellent Catholic masters, is given up to backbiting, gossiping, murmuring, and frivolous or unruly conduct, if the mistress of the family would follow this admirable plan of gathering her servants together for such a purpose, conversing with them as a real, affectionate friend! If Madame Acarie found that her servants did not yield to her gentle influence, and persisted in any bad habits, especially swearing, drinking, evil-speaking, or any immodesty of conduct, she gave them two or three warnings, and then dismissed them from her service. She furnished them with plenty of wholesome occupation, and saw that they were never hanging about, talking, without work to do or books to read. She trained them to live together in peace and harmony,

and to speak to one another with gentleness and civility; and once when she was exceedingly ill, and her own maid had reproved the kitchen-maid for bringing something into the room in a noisy, giddy way, Madame Acarie rebuked her, and said that whatever faults the other servants committed she must not forget to reprove them with charity. When any of the household were ill, Madame Acarie had them nursed by such of their fellow-servants as were the best nurses, however inconvenient it might be to herself. Once, when one of the men-servants, named Vincent, was seized with some infectious complaint, she had him removed to a room at the end of the house, and actually undertook all the nursing herself. She made his bed, cleaned his abscesses, prepared his food, and did everything that was requisite in the sick room. So great a blessing was poured out upon her exceeding charity, that the disease did not spread, nor did she herself sustain the least harm, while Vincent was completely cured.

It may easily be conceived that such lessons as these, so carried into practice before their eyes, trained a body of admirable Christian servants. In the midst of the terrible evils and scandals of the time, there were none in Madame Acarie's house, which she ruled in this way with gentle wisdom for thirty years. It was, in fact, exactly like a religious

house, and it was deposed by Marie Acarie, among others, that all the servants under her father's roof meditated every day upon some religious truth, used corporal austerities, and spent every minute of their spare time, when they were in waiting, according to the custom then, in some ante-room, in prayer, saying their beads, reading, writing, or doing some other useful work. M. de Bérulle also said that whenever he knocked at the door, the servant who opened it was reading or saying his beads. In this 'earthly Paradise,' as Mdlle. de Raconis justly called the house, it became the habit to receive Communion every Sunday and holy day through the year, and many people in Paris went some distance to Mass at the quaint, old high-roofed Church of St. Gervais, merely to see Madame Acarie with her children and servants at the service. They said that their singularly calm devout faces and modest reverence stirred up fresh fervour in themselves, and had a general influence upon the congregation. One lady, who had gone to Paris from Picardy, was so amazed that she said to M. du Val, 'I have never yet seen such a sight. I never could have believed that such piety could be found in that class of life.'

'It need not surprise you there,' he answered. 'That was Madame Acarie's household, and what the masters are that will the servants be.'

Most of Madame Acarie's servants ended by becoming nuns or friars in some religious order. Her faithful and confidential man-servant, Edmond de Messa, became a Friar Minim of St. Francis of Paula, and, after a useful life, made a most holy end. Guichard is also mentioned as always longing to be in a convent. But perhaps the chief flower of her household was Etienne, who had been taken into the Hôtel Acarie when a little boy, and carefully instructed by his mistress in religion and good habits. When he grew up to be a lad, Madame Acarie apprenticed him to a carpet-maker who lived near her own house; but when his apprenticeship was ended, Etienne told his mistress that he earnestly wished to enter a school of another kind, that he had already consecrated himself to God, and that he longed to leave the world. Madame Acarie therefore placed him as sacristan with the Carmelites in the Faubourg St. Jacques, where singularly enough he almost immediately met with an accident of which he died. It is reported that Etienne had been shown an interior vision of a splendid throne of light in Heaven, and knew that it was prepared for his mistress, Madame Acarie. After his death, many of those who had known him went to pray at his grave.

CHAPTER VI.

Work out of doors.

It is impossible to stir up the love of God by striving to serve Him faithfully in any one path of duty, without also awakening the desire for a larger circle of duties and fresh ways of manifesting love. Her own children and household were by no means sufficient to exhaust Madame Acarie's abounding charity, and after her affairs were settled she undertook several good works in Paris, though always after special prayer and consultation with some experienced guide. Her daughter Marie deposed that she never knew her mother refuse any sort of good work, whatever it might be; although, like most persons of eminent holiness, she herself preferred helping the very poor, and the voluntary poor of Christ's flock, especially the nuns and friars of convents that were not much visited or protected by rich lay people. In the case of poor priests who were ill, Madame Acarie often took them into her own house to be nursed. This she did with her friend M. du Val, the famous doctor of the Sorbonne,

and many others. When the stations or missions were being preached in remote country places, Madame Acarie tried to find out the chief people who lived in the neighbourhood, and always recommended the priest to their care. In fact, all sorts of needs appealed to her, and she was wholly free from the wooden, self-seeking spirit which attaches itself firmly to one groove of good works, and repudiates all others as alien. The phrases, 'This is my work,' or, 'That is not my work,' were phrases never heard from Madame Acarie's lips. Widows, orphans, children abandoned by their parents, poor relations, prisoners, good people fallen in their condition, common thieves, all appealed to Madame Acarie's sympathies, or were brought under her notice by other good people, and never asked help in vain. One day a woman left six children at her door; another, a young thief was brought to the house by her parents in despair; and again, girls in danger of falling, from want or temptations, came to throw themselves upon her mercy. She provided for them all. The six children were brought up in her house, apprenticed, and looked after till they married; the thieving girl was sent to a convent and carefully educated; the poor tempted girls were lodged in and near her own house, and were taught to earn an honest living. To poor ladies she sent

weekly sums of money, and if they were sensitive about their poverty she made them presents of silk gowns.

During the well-known dreadful famine which, during the siege of Paris (1590) cost the lives of twenty thousand persons in the capital alone,[1] Madame Acarie entertained a crowd of people at meals every day in her house. It is said that to increase the quantity of flour to be given away, she then ordered bad rancid suet to be mixed with her own share of meal, and finding that her mother-in-law had concealed a secret store of corn, she threatened to denounce her to the city magistrates unless she opened her stores and fed the poor. During that most dreadful time, when it is recorded that the extremest horrors of the siege of Jerusalem were repeated in Paris, Madame Acarie was one day going to church with her little dog following her. Two gentlemen who were nearly mad with hunger came hurrying to her, and with eager excitement besought her to let them take the dog and kill it for food. She was so shocked at their wild, famished looks that she could not speak, but bursting into tears made them a sign that they were to take the poor dog. It was during that same famine that in many parts of eastern France the peasants ground walnut-

[1] Père Maimbourg, *Histoire de la Ligue.*

shells into their flour for bread, greedily ate grass and roots out of the fields, and even dug up half-putrid carcasses of animals that had died.

But the hospitals were the chosen places of Madame Acarie's heart, and she spent hours at the Hôtel Dieu and St. Gervais, cleansing the poor sufferers' wounds, holding them by the hand during operations, giving them medicines and preparing their poultices, and kneeling with a blessed taper beside their beds at the approach of death. When she was too ill to go there, the very name of the Hôtel Dieu would put her into an ecstasy of joy, and she would cry out, 'The Hôtel Dieu! Ah! House of God! House of love!' Madame Acarie was the first lady of her time who thus set the example of going to the Paris hospitals, which were then dirty, ill-kept, and revolting; and she stirred up many others to join in the work, to their own great benefit and the relief of the poor sufferers, who often at that time lay neglected, unwashed, and uncared for in the wards.

In after years, when Madame Acarie was a Carmelite nun, she returned to her work among the sick in the infirmaries with the most enthusiastic delight. She was often known to spend whole days beside the beds and besides conversing with the sick Sisters pleasantly and consolingly on spiritual things, she delighted and astonished them by the variety of her

stories, her little devices and games for whiling away their sufferings, and her childlike gaiety and cheerfulness. 'She made herself a child with the sick,' one of the nuns deposed, 'but she did so with such grace and sweetness, such innocent gaiety of heart, that it was impossible to appreciate her ways without seeing her.'

'Deep calls to deep' in the stores of charity, and Madame Acarie's ministrations with the suffering were never confined to their bodily wants. With the wounded soldiers at St. Gervais' hospital she delighted in hovering about the wards, watching her opportunity to suggest that they should make their confessions, receive the Viaticum, and begin their preparation of heart for death. She would flit softly from bed to bed with a crucifix in her hand, speaking a few sweet, soft words to each, reminding them of our Lord's loving thirst for their souls, and lifting up their dulled or hardened minds to the thought of Heaven and its endless joys. Madame Acarie became the idol of the hospital, and whenever she was seen coming into a ward, blessings were showered from all the beds upon her. It was observed that whenever she was present at the giving of the last sacraments to any soldier, with her blessed taper, he never failed to die in great peace and resigned to all the pain that he suffered.

Madame Acarie's father, M. Avrillot, was one of her chief cares in his old age. It will be remembered that he had gone into Champagne during the League wars, but that afterwards he was settled near Paris, at Ivry, where M. Acarie had a house. Madame Acarie had too much sense of propriety and reverence to admonish her father as she was accustomed to do with other people, but she saw that he had abundance of spiritual help and comfort. M. Avrillot died very happily and peacefully in 1602.

The singular aptitude Madame Acarie had for guiding and enlightening souls was not allowed to be lavished solely upon the poor and the Paris hospitals. The eminent men who were concerned at various times in directing her, sent to her all kinds of persons who were in trouble, in difficulties, entanglements, and actual sin. At one time she dispersed a whole congregation of Anabaptists by converting the master and mistress of the house where they met; at another, she succeeded in reconciling a bad Catholic of some position both to the Church and to his wife, whom he was treating in the most barbarous way, keeping her shut up, and once actually forcing her to confess to one of his stablemen, whom he had dressed up as a priest. A lawsuit having obliged him to take this poor wife to Paris, she there made the acquaintance of Madame Acarie, who

then made it her business to see the husband, and convinced him that he was imperilling his soul.

Madame Acarie carried on a quiet but most generous apostolate for girls and women who had fallen into sin. She even opened her house to those who seemed to require such tender care, and several times went so far as to receive them into her own room. Far from entertaining the common idea that such a work can only be carried on in convents, or where there is no near neighbourhood of innocent young people, this noble woman listened only to the cry of the strayed and wounded sheep whom she rescued from all sorts of perils worse than death. One poor victim of man's brutality, who in her despair had hung herself on a tree, was cut down by a gentleman who was riding by, and brought to Madame Acarie's ever-open door. She took her in, restored her thoroughly, and after comforting her in every way, sent her to lodge with a good woman of her acquaintance, with whom she remained. Madame Acarie sought out various safe little nests, the homes of worthy women, near her own house, where she could lodge these poor creatures and keep them till their children were born. Afterwards they were well placed, either in service, or in business, or marriage, or—as the restrictions now opposing it did not then exist—were settled in convents to which they had

a vocation. In cases of women of a higher rank, who were forcibly prevented from carrying out a return to a better life, Madame Acarie did not hesitate to apply to Mary de' Medici, or even the King himself, to set them free. M. Gauthier, of whom mention is often made in her life, deposed on oath that to his knowledge during sixteen years before she went into a convent, Madame Acarie had been the means of converting or saving at least ten thousand souls.

Another important and, in those days, most urgent good work undertaken by her, or rather forced little by little upon her, was that of stirring up relaxed communities of women to renewed discipline and zeal. Unhappily, there were many instances of such communities scattered throughout France, that laxity had become the rule rather than the exception in religious life. Among those which Madame Acarie frequented and helped to renew were the Abbeys of Montivilliers at Rome, and St. Etienne at Soissons; the nursing nuns at the Hôtel Dieu and the Filles Dieu, Longchamp and Montmartre, in and near Paris, the convents at Charmes in Lorraine and Troyes, with others whose names have not been preserved. With many more Madame Acarie's efforts were unavailing, but her zeal and example were of the utmost use to the Poor Clares convent, called the Ave Maria, in Paris, which she loved exceedingly,

and where she liked to send a good many of the girls who consulted her as to their vocations. When asked what there was in this convent that attracted her so much, she answered that these Poor Clares had always preserved their great simplicity, their spirit of poverty and austerity, and their strict inclosure, adding, not yet dreaming of ever being a Carmelite, that if she should outlive her husband, it was there that she should wish to end her days. While busied about these convents, Madame Acarie once said to M. du Val, 'Where the love of "propriety" [that is, of possessing anything as one's own] creeps into a community, means vanish even visibly. But where poverty is strictly observed, money heaps up.' When reading of the various communities sustained by her instructions or example, we are not surprised to learn that later on, in close union with Cardinal de Bérulle, Madame Acarie maintained an active correspondence of twenty years with all the Superiors of reformed orders in France and other Catholic countries. At the same time she found leisure for giving counsel and support to women of the highest position and acquirements, who came to her in Paris and from all parts of France to seek help in their troubles.

CHAPTER VII.

Friends and Guides.

ONE of the most charming of Madame Acarie's characteristics in what may be called her probationary life was her singular capacity for forming a variety of lasting friendships. And this point must be dwelt upon at some length, because the various eminent and spiritual men and women who were interested or concerned in shaping her special work formed the very core of the religious revival of the seventeenth century. And, moreover, the multiplied variety of eminent people who grouped themselves about this remarkable woman are the best evidence of the variety and largeness of her own character. The first part of her life owed its bent in a great degree to the direction of a knot of eminent men, the first of whom was the learned English Capuchin, Father Bennet of Canfeld, in Essex, one of the converts who were imprisoned under Queen Elizabeth, and who was only released by the special intercession of Henry IV. of France. Father Canfeld preached and heard confessions in Paris till his death, in 1611,

which was hastened by his great austerities. His direction opened a new light to Madame Acarie, who was then labouring under severe depression, with the idea that the spiritual favours she was receiving were temptations or illusions. Father Canfeld released her from the bondage of this great trouble, taught her how to submit her soul peacefully to God's guidance, to be very faithful in little things, and to travel onward, rejoicing under her burthens. He once assured several spiritual persons that he believed it would one day be recognized that the marvels vouchsafed to Madame Acarie were even of a higher order than those bestowed upon St. Catharine of Genoa.[1] About this time she made the acquaintance of the famous André du Val, the learned and austere doctor of the Sorbonne, who became her guide, her intimate friend, and one of the chief instruments with her in establishing the Carmelites in France. M. du Val was once lodged at the Hôtel Acarie during an illness of two months, and when he returned to 'la pauvre Sorbonne,' Madame Acarie sent him a bed, some chairs, and two folding-chairs for his frequent illnesses. This celebrated man had for some time hesitated between the priesthood and the bar of Paris, which then reckoned so many eminent members, but he finally decided, from the purest

[1] 'Plus intérieur, plus grand, plus admirable.'

motives, on the priesthood. He entered the Sorbonne, received his licentiate, and, after a brilliant course of disputations, the doctor's cap. He next made his retreat, after the then new method of the Spiritual Exercises, and felt extremely drawn to enter religious life, but received distinct intimations that this was not the Divine will, and that he would be of more service to religion by teaching theology where he was. He refused all kinds of wealthy benefices and posts, but finally accepted two professorial chairs, founded by Henry IV., and offered by the King himself to M. du Val, in spite of his having been deeply implicated in the League. A saying was current at that time of Cardinal du Perron, Bishop of Evreux, of which the first half is well known: 'If you know of any heretics to be *convinced*, you may bring them to me; but if you want them to be *converted*, you must take them to Monseigneur of Geneva [St. Francis de Sales]. If both are needed, send them to M. de Bérulle, and in case of any difficulties or troubles of conscience, let them go to M. du Val.'

After holding his chair at the Sorbonne for forty-two years, M. du Val died there in great holiness in 1638, and was buried in the church of that time-honoured but stormy University. His heart, at his own request, was separately placed in the Carmelite

chapel at Pontoise, close to Madame Acarie's grave.[2]

Dom Beaucousin, a vicar at the Chartreuse, or Carthusian monastery of Paris, was another of the spiritual guides that took part in Madame Acarie's direction. He soon perceived the hidden treasures of grace in her soul, and told André du Val that although he had had a long experience in spiritual things, he had learned more from her than she could ever learn from him. He put her in charge of such good works outside the monastery as he could not attend to himself, and took great pains in forming her to spiritual life. He was sent to Cahors in 1602, when his intercourse with Madame Acarie necessarily came to an end.

Another guide, and one of the most celebrated of her friends, was, however, at hand, the boy to whom it had been revealed in his childhood that he should one day help Madame Acarie in a great religious work. This was M. Gallemant, the venerable Curé of Aumale, who came to Paris to preach at his own parish Church of St. Gervais, where she sat immediately opposite the pulpit. When M. Gallemant,

[2] This epitaph, destroyed in 1792, was on the urn :

'Astra tenent Duvalli animam : pia Sorbona, corpus :
Cor domus hæc, tanta maxima cura viri.
Sed quia, dum vixit, fuit omnibus omnibus omnia, totum
Qui cor totus erat, flebilis urna tegit.'

after a while, fixed his eyes upon her as he was preaching, he felt an interior intimation that this soul was to become specially under his charge, and after the service he detained her, and talked to her for some time. This wise director fulfilled the course of guidance which Father Canfeld had begun, and he required of Madame Acarie one only thing, that she should never allow her desire for ecstatic contemplation to interfere in the least with her good works or any outward duty.

M. Gallemant filled many posts before he finally became one of the Superiors of the Reformed Carmelite nuns. As Professor of Rhetoric at Beauvais, he first began to live upon vegetables only, and to sleep upon a bed of boards. As Curé of Aumale, he changed the whole face of the parish by his industrious charity in seeking and saving souls, catechizing, teaching, and displaying the most unwearied ingenuity in winning sinners. When the Jesuits were banished from France in 1594, M. Gallemant established a college at Aumale after their model, and founded also two congregations of young women for teaching girls. He succeeded, moreover, in that most difficult task of reforming several monasteries and convents that had become relaxed. When it becomes our lot to relate the establishment and government of Carmelite nuns in France, frequent mention will be made of his name.

St. Francis de Sales himself was Madame Acarie's confessor during six months, while he was in Paris, concerting with Henry IV. the restoration of the Catholic faith in Gex, in his diocese. This experienced master of spiritual direction soon became aware of the noble qualities revealed to him, but with that exceeding delicacy which was so eminently his characteristic, St. Francis did not press her with questions, especially as to the interior favours granted her; as he afterwards said with some regret, he 'heard rather than asked,' feeling that his exceeding respect had prevented his hearing secrets that lift up the heart with thankfulness, besides being most instructive in dealing with souls. 'She spoke much more readily of her faults than of the graces given her,' he said; 'and I looked upon her, not as a penitent, but a vessel consecrated by the Holy Spirit for His use.'

Madame Acarie's portrait was afterwards sent to St. Francis de Sales by another of her great friends, M. de Marillac, the accomplished Keeper of the Seals, and on that occasion the saintly Bishop wrote to several persons that it was not only a delightful thing to have, but was most useful in stirring up holy thoughts. After her death, he wrote to Angélique Arnauld, then Prioress of Maubuisson, and still in the early fervour of a life as yet untainted with religious

error, that Madame Acarie was one of the few penitents he had known in whose confessions there was no matter for absolution. There were natural imperfections and inadvertencies, but not such faults as were matter for the Sacrament of Penance. Again, two days before his death, while giving an instruction to the Visitandine nuns at Lyons, St. Francis de Sales used these words:

'It is very good to discern between venial sin and imperfection, when you know how to do it, but there are not two persons in two hundred who do know how, and even the holiest people are not able to discern it. I will tell you what happened to me once while confessing Sister Mary of the Incarnation, who was then in the world [not in a convent]. After I had heard her once or twice, she accused herself of several imperfections. I told her that I could not give her absolution, because there was no sin in her accusation, which astonished her greatly, for she had never made any distinction between venial sin and imperfection. I told her she might add some sin formerly committed, as all of you do. Afterwards she thanked me most warmly for this. You can see how difficult it is [to discern the difference], considering that this soul that was so enlightened, had remained so long in ignorance [on this point]. It

is not necessary to be over anxious to discern the distinction, for this great servant of God failed not to become holy, although she did not know it.'[3]

The friend whose name is outwardly most connected with Madame Acarie, and whose labours with her in establishing the Carmelite nuns in France will oblige us to make frequent mention of him, was M. de Bérulle, whose mother, Madame Séquier, was related to the admirable family of the Lhuilliers of Madame Acarie's maternal stock.[4] M. de Bérulle, being the son of Madame Acarie's friend, was of course many years younger than the rest of her advisers and chief friends, but this did not prevent her from having perfect confidence in him in his turn, as a guide. Pierre de Bérulle was a Champagnard, a noble of old legal family on both sides. He was born in 1575, at the château de Serilly, near Trages, but spent the chief part of his life in Paris. It was something of a coincidence that he also, at one time, made a choice of Dom Beaucousin the Carthusian, as his director, and under his guidance made astonishing spiritual progress. At first he studied and intended to follow the profession of the law, but at last resolved upon the priesthood, first making his studies under

[3] *Vie*, Auguste de Sales, lib x. p. 568.

[4] Mother Lhuillier, the Visitandine nun at Chaillot, was the great friend of Mary of Modena, the Queen of James II.

the Jesuits, and, after they were driven from France, at the Sorbonne. Soon after his ordination, Henry IV. appointed M. de Bérulle his private chaplain, and proposed to him to undertake the charge of the Dauphin (afterwards Louis XIII.); but as M. de Bérulle could not bear the idea of leading the necessary Court life, he declined this charge. In 1611 he succeeded in founding the French Oratory, a congregation of priests without religious vows, depending upon the bishops, but which had no connection with the Roman Oratory of St. Philip Neri. This congregation later on gave him great anxiety and trouble. M. de Bérulle[5] was afterwards employed by the Court in several most delicate and difficult negotiations, which, in spite of his constant toil and the spirit of prayer in which they were undertaken, failed of success. This was chiefly owing to a certain rigidity and incisiveness of character, which made him immoveably persistent in the views and line which he thought right, and which led at one time to difficulties with the Carmelite Fathers in Spain.

Madame Acarie's friendship with M. de Bérulle and M. de Marillac was in many ways remarkable. M. de Marillac himself testified that he never recollected the least relaxation of the gravity and sweet

[5] Urban VIII. sent him the hat in 1627.

authority of her manner, and that during the twelve years of their intercourse before she became a Carmelite, there was never the slightest frivolity or lightness in their talk, nor the faintest approach to that natural familiarity which long years of intimacy generally brings about. M. de Marillac became a kind of universal procurator for the Carmelite nuns, spending very large sums of money in perfect faith on Madame Acarie's word, never pledged in vain, for the buying of land or building convents. He used often to say, that 'Madame Acarie's word was better than money in a bank.' When she finally went away to be a Carmelite at Amiens, she gave him this last piece of advice: 'Never give up undertaking any good work on account of want of money.'

Madame Acarie once said to a Carmelite Prioress: 'M. de Marillac is a great servant of God, and I know very few who are like him. We ought to look upon him as the true father of our Order, for he has done more for our temporal and even spiritual good than even our spiritual Reverend Fathers.' M. de Marillac's niece, Louise, married M. Le Gras, and afterwards became the chief instrument with St. Vincent de Paul, in founding the Sisters of Charity.

Madame Acarie's own women friends, though

not so numerous or remarkable as the men who gathered to her assistance, were still women chosen out, and most useful as founders or assistants in good works. Madame de Bérulle has already been mentioned, as also that it was in the Hôtel Bérulle that Madame Acarie lived while administering her husband's affairs. Probably these two women stirred up and fed in each other the fire of charity which burned so brightly in both, and it is distinctly said that Madame de Bérulle owed to her younger friend that love of the counsels of perfection which led her also, at the age of fifty-five, to enter the Carmelite Order.

Another special friend of Madame Acarie and a chief frequenter of the Hôtel in the Rue des Juifs, was Charlotte Marguérite de Gondi, Marchioness de Meignelay, aunt to the too famous Cardinal de Retz, the hero of the Fronde. There is something more than usually remarkable in the singular disparity of lots which the same families reveal in France, and which is owing to that force and vividness of character which either embraced religion, and carried it out with extraordinary love and fervour, or cast it aside, while firmly believing in its doctrines and vital efficacy, and trampled it deliberately under foot. There was in most of these latter cases, no paltering with

error, no half-hearted mischief, but a determined fulfilment of the resolve—

Evil, be thou my good!

We find, therefore, such startling facts as the relationship of Cardinal de Retz and Madame de Meignelay, Bussy Rabutin and St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Louis XV. and Madame Louise, and the like, continually recurring; and it was no mere unlikeness between members of the same family, but an absolute gulf cleft between them, which it seemed impossible to pass. Madame de Meignelay was a woman among the highest in position in France at that time; the child of the Duke de Retz, a peer and Marshal of France, when such dignities were rare and precious; the niece of one Cardinal (de Gondi) and the aunt of another. Her four brothers filled some of the highest offices in the Church and kingdom, and she was married at seventeen, to Florimond d'Halluin de Piennes, in Picardy, Marquis de Meignelay, of one of those illustrious, knightly old houses of France, so many of which have vanished, submerged by successive revolutions. The Marquis lived only three years, and at twenty, Madame de Meignelay was left a widow with two little children. A strange consultation was held, soon afterwards, upon her vocation, which by order of the Papal Nuncio was examined

by a kind of committee, among which were M. de Bérulle, M. du Val, and the Jesuit Father Suffren. They reported their evidence to the Nuncio, and some idea of Madame de Meignelay's importance may be gained by hearing that he decided by an Apostolic Brief that Madame de Meignelay would do more good to religion by remaining as she was, leading her usual life in the world than by entering a convent. She was confirmed in this belief at that time by a very beautiful letter from Madame Acarie.

Another friend and valuable assistant in her work to Madame Acarie was Madame de Ste. Beuve, who one day took with her to the Hôtel Acarie a beautiful and beautifully dressed woman, a second Charlotte, Mdlle. de Sancy, afterwards Marchioness de Bréauté, whose father had been a Calvinist of mark, who had been converted and reconciled to the Church, and afterwards murdered at Bois-le-duc during some of the malignant quarrels of the League. His wife had then thought of going into a convent, and upon becoming acquainted with Madame Acarie, who was then occupied with the Carmelite foundations, Madame de Bréauté thought of entering that Order, though she felt the deepest repugnance to it. She was often useful to her friend by softening the impatient irritability of M. Acarie, when he was vexed that his wife

was so absorbed in good works. To divert his mind from these thoughts, Madame de Bréauté took M. Acarie out driving with her, and he was so delighted with her bright, kindly ways and the charm of her conversation, that he once said to his wife, 'I do hope that you are not going to make a Carmelite of that charming Marchioness.'

Nevertheless, that was exactly what came to pass, and the gay, laughing, volatile Madame de Bréauté —whose taste in dress was remarkable even at that day of rich, fantastic apparel—became eventually Sister Marie de Jésus, the Prioress of the first Carmelite foundation in France.

CHAPTER VIII.

A brave heart.

BEFORE passing on to the great and crowning work of Madame Acarie's life, it will be well to pause a little to see in what way she was preparing herself for the reward which came to her eventually, as the hundred-fold of her labours in this world. It has already been seen that, though she was a most gentle, tender, and loving mother and mistress, yet her strictness and minute watchfulness in pruning away the

faults of her children and dependents were what would probably be now greeted with an outcry of protest and dissatisfaction. But Madame Acarie's strict watchfulness in calling her family to account was intensified a thousand-fold in regard to herself; and the severity of self-treatment which her historians reveal is such that we cannot but pause, amazed, to ask, if these things are done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry, and to ask ourselves how we shall fare, whose best efforts seem, beside hers, mere cowardly softness of life?

To begin with, Madame Acarie allowed herself so little food that she was always suffering from hunger, and she said one day to M. de Marillac that hunger was the greatest temptation she was aware of. Whenever she was dining with friends, she either began some interesting conversation, or occupied herself in carving, and serving them, so that she could leave what was put upon her plate without exciting attention. Whenever she was ill, and nourishing food was ordered for her by the doctors, she managed to get rid of the chief part of what was prepared for her. During the whole of M. Acarie's exile, his wife ate only once a day, dining upon a little bread and cheese and a glass of water. Even when M. Acarie had returned home again, she never took supper, and still continued to make her chief meal upon bread.

Another of Madame Acarie's constant acts of mortification was to deprive herself of sleep. She watched in prayer the first hours of the night, after which she used a sharp discipline, or, if she were very tired, ordered Andrée to give it her. Then she went to bed till towards daybreak, when, though she was quite overwhelmed with sleep, she would immediately get up and go to church, accompanied by her faithful Etienne. When with Madame de Bérulle in the Marais she went to Ste. Geneviève, and usually made her confession and went to Communion every day. After Mass she attended to the business she had then in hand, and about noon took her slender dinner of bread and cheese, with sometimes a roasted apple and a glass of water. M. de Marillac deposed that she had acknowledged that she always wore a sharp girdle next the skin. Her confessors in vain represented to her that as she belonged to her husband and children, and her life was very valuable, she ought to take more food and rest; for feeling the extraordinary impulsion of the Holy Spirit in regard to her self-inflictions, Madame Acarie replied by asking them if they did not think God was guiding her in certain interior manifestations. They unanimously answered that they were sure she was thus guided by Him. She then represented that she was led to such and such practices of mortification by exactly

the same impulsion that led her during prayer, and that having thus conceived them to be suggested to her by the Spirit of God she had not dared to disobey Him. They therefore assented, and André du Val expressly says that Madame Acarie's health never appeared to suffer, but the contrary, from her mortified way of life.

Plenty of other sufferings were laid upon her besides those which were self-chosen. In the year 1596 she was returning on horseback from Luzarches, where she had been to see her husband, when her horse stumbled and fell, and Madame Acarie both dislocated and broke the thigh bone of her right leg. Her foot had been entangled in the stirrup, and the horse dragged her a long way before it was disengaged. Then she lay for two hours in great pain upon the road, before she could make any one hear. When, at length, her servant, who in the darkness of the night had missed her and gone on, returned with a peasant to look for her, they found Madame Acarie perfectly calm and collected, though suffering intense pain. She neither cried out nor shed a tear, but bade them ride to the next village and bring back a cart with some straw and a sheet.

They took her in this way about two-and-twenty miles to Paris, over dreadfully rough jolting roads, while Madame Acarie repeatedly thanked the men

for their charity and goodness in taking so much trouble for her, and they could hear her softly praising God's mercy for sending their help and guarding her from the wolves, who were at that time very dangerous in the country parts of France. When, after a wearisome journey, they reached Paris, and the great surgeon of the time, Bailleul, was sent for, he was out, and his assistant came instead, whose skill seems to have been small, for he pulled at the limb with all his force before the dislocation was reduced, and after all it was not properly done, and the next morning when Bailleul came he was obliged to wrench the limb again out of its place before it could be properly set. This operation, which cost Madame Acarie two long hours of dreadful agony, was borne without once crying out. Bailleul was so amazed at her courage that he could not help saying, 'But how is this, Madame? I am giving you unheard-of pain, and you have not once cried out. Are you dead or alive?'

Madame Acarie only answered by begging him to finish the operation. She then remained about four months in bed, and when she went out again about her husband's affairs she was obliged to be lifted to the carriage and into the rooms of the people she went to see. It was doubtful whether, after all, the limb was ever rightly set, for the next year she broke

it again at Calvey, where she had gone to see her eldest boy, and again, a third time, at Ivry, when M. Acarie had gone to live there. The third fracture caused her continual and intense pain, and thenceforth till her death she always made use of a crutch or a strong cane. In fact, any little slip or inequality of ground was apt to make the thigh bone slip again out of joint, or at least out of its place, and the continual suffering and weariness caused by this kind of lameness can only be rightly appreciated by those who have seen its effects.

Madame Acarie carried out her spirit of death to self so far that she never made any suggestions to the doctors who attended her in illness. She once said to M. de Marillac when it was proposed to bleed her, 'I know that bleeding is not good for me, but they had better do what they like with my body.'

There is no doubt that there was something more than natural in the gladness she showed during the bodily suffering of sickness, a gladness which shone in her face and sounded in her voice, and probably allowed her to give an utterance of delight even in the intense mysterious pains of the stigmatic wounds, which were none the less real because they never exhibited themselves exteriorly.

Whenever she was so ill that she was confined to her room and her bed, Madame Acarie made use of

the time, not to rest, as is usual, from all labour, but to gather in a greater harvest of souls. She ordered and administered her household affairs, sent for her children and servants to speak to them one by one, and had interviews with the ladies or young people she was in the habit of advising, speaking to them with such earnestness and fervour that her words sank deeply into every heart.

It was characteristic both of Madame Acarie and her age that her favourite devotion when in great pain was reciting the beautiful hymn in the office for the dedication of a church, dwelling most upon the words that the stones of the Heavenly Jerusalem must be cut, fitted, re-cut, and polished with sharp instruments and much labour before they can be used in the glorious temple made without hands. This is only one out of the numberless instances which point to the large, enlightened, masculine aspect of the piety of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The holy people of that date clung with exceeding affection to the light of the Scriptures and the strong consolations of the Psalms, and dwelt with such persistent love upon the suggestions of the magnificent offices of the Church as showed that the study of her ritual and liturgies was part of their daily life. And there is no doubt that the strength of this satisfying and substantial food furnished them,

so to speak, with the bone and muscle and nerve for which they were distinguished, and which wrought in them such splendid and gigantic results, both of personal holiness and of works of charity. The whole tenor of Madame Acarie's mind in sickness was a commentary upon the kind of spiritual knowledge she had stored up. '*Tu Rex gloriæ Christe!*' she would cry, in great suffering, '*Dominus meus et Deus meus!*' or, '*Quid mihi est in cælo? Alleluia.*' Even when pouring out her own intimate longing and yearning for the 'City not built with hands,' she would show that they were grafted upon a thorough acquaintance with the offices and hymns of the Breviary and Liturgy. 'When shall we see that glorious land, *ubi neque luctus, neque clamor, neque dolor erit ultra?*' yet, again, '*Benedictus Deus in donis suis!*' Who has given us His grace and therefore the hope of His glory! And very often Madame Acarie repeated, 'Make ready my heart, O God! Make ready my heart! For what? For the Cross, for suffering, for all the trials Thou wilt send. Let me only be ready to accept them!'

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.—Preparing the Ground 91
CHAPTER II.—Preparing the Plants 108
CHAPTER III.—Notre Dame des Champs. 115
CHAPTER IV.—From France to Spain 124
CHAPTER V.—From Spain to France 140

CHAPTER I.

Preparing the Ground.

THE story of most religious orders must embrace in general periods of relaxation as well as of foundation and advance; and the periods of relaxation naturally lead to the periods of reform. The old Order of the Carmelites ran through all these phases, though it will not be possible here to enter upon the details either of its rise or decline. It will be enough to mention that the name of the order was derived from Mount Carmel in Palestine, rising above the plain of Esdraelon, the chosen haunt of the prophets Elias, Eliseus, and the "sons of the prophets," from whom a succession of hermits was traced by the order to the twelfth century.

It is, at any rate, historically certain that in the early part of the thirteenth century St. Berthold gathered the scattered hermits of Mount Carmel into a community, and that he was succeeded by St. Brocard or Brocardus, to whom Pope Honorius II. granted a rule, which was drawn up by St. Albert, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. This is known as the

"primitive rule," to distinguish it from the mitigations allowed by Eugenius IV. and Pius II., when the relaxation had become so great that the mitigated rule was in some sort a return to strictness. The Saracens had cruelly ill-treated the Carmelites, and driven them into Europe, where they spread through Christendom, and especially multiplied in England, where from the effects of climate and other causes they seem to have declined considerably from their primitive way of life. Several eminent men among themselves revived the ancient fervour from time to time, especially St. Simon Stock, St. Andrew Corsini, and others; and in the time of Blessed John of Soreth, convents of the order were founded for women. In one of these, at Florence, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi lived and died in great fervour in 1607. But the great and lasting Carmelite reform was effected by St. Teresa, then a Carmelite nun in the Convent of the Incarnation at Avila in Spain, but which she left to begin the reform in the same town in a house which was afterwards erected into the first convent ever known in Christendom under St. Joseph's invocation. St. Teresa founded fourteen reformed convents for women in her own lifetime, and two more through Mother Anne of Jesus. She also founded two reformed convents for men, and the first reformed Carmelite friar was St. John of

the Cross, her great coadjutor in the Order itself, and the sharer of the odium which must always fall to the reformer's lot. St. Teresa's convents were at first subject to the Provincials of the Mitigated Carmelites, but in 1580 Pope Gregory XIII. gave the reformed nuns a Provincial for themselves, and in 1581 their constitutions were drawn up, which the French convents have always preserved. They continued subject to the General of the Mitigated Carmelite Fathers until 1593, when Pope Clement VIII. granted them a separate General, when the government of the two branches of Carmelites was entirely separated, and St. Teresa's reform, both for men and women, was known as the Discalced Carmelites. Even the Reform, in 1600, was divided into two congregations, each with its General: one of Spain, where the General resides; one of Italy, embracing the rest of Christendom and foreign countries, whose General resides at Rome. But the *French* Carmelites, and this must always be borne in mind, with the exception of those in Lorraine and Avignon,[1] are not subject to either of these Generals, but possess ecclesiastical superiors and a government of their own. So much must necessarily be said before the events that follow can be clearly understood.

It is said that St. Teresa was from the first deeply

[1] Subject to Italy.

interested in restoring religious fervour in France by means of her reformed rule, and was touched to the heart at the spread of heresy and destruction of souls in that great religious country. It was only natural, therefore, that although the contests and difficulties which gathered about her own life effectually prevented her from personally taking any steps towards France, the charity which 'never faileth' sprang up after her death with fresh vigour and fruitfulness. The first step was taken by one of those lay friends who cluster in so remarkable a way about the story of the transplanting of the Carmelites to France.

This was M. Jean de Brétigny, half of Spanish half of French blood, who seems to have succeeded to his maternal grandfather's estates and gone by his name, for what reason it is not said.[2]

M. de Brétigny was, even as a boy, exceedingly pious, and showed true Spanish loyalty to the Catholic faith, even when quite a child, refusing to listen to Marot's Psalms, which were commonly sung by the Huguenots to popular and enticing airs. He was sent to his uncle in Spain to keep him out of the hearing of the false opinions and disputes which then tore France asunder. When about six-and-

[2] Don Ferdinand de la Quintanadoine of Burgos, married Mdlle. de Cavelier de Brétigny, and settled in France.

twenty M. de Brétigny became acquainted with the Reformed Carmelites, and was the first person to propose their going to France, while by their advice he gave up all idea of marrying, was ordained priest, and put himself entirely under M. Gallemant's direction at Aumale. Both these men, therefore, in different ways, were of great service to Madame Acarie, and became closely united in the work of bringing the Carmelites to France. M. de Brétigny especially made such sacrifices of himself, his time, and his fortune for this object, that he was known among the Carmelites in Spain as "St. Teresa's eldest son."

It was in the very year of her death that M. de Brétigny went the second time to Spain, and became acquainted with Mother Mary of St. Joseph, and he spent the next four years in reading St. Teresa's works, learning every detail that he could glean about the order, and visiting the various reformed convents. He became known to St. John of the Cross and Father Jerome Gratian, and accompanied Mother Mary of St. Joseph when she founded the convent at Lisbon, for which he furnished the means.

In the same way he generously fitted out several Carmelite Fathers for the foreign missions, and accompanied them to the seaport to put them on board. In 1586 M. de Brétigny had already been

furnished by the Provincial Chapter with powers to establish a convent of Discalced Fathers in Paris, and the French ambassador had accredited him with letters to the King (then Henry III.).

But the dangerous, distracted condition of France prevented the fulfilment of this plan, and the time was evidently not ripe for carring it out. It was not till 1591, in fact, that M. de Brétigny made the acquaintance of the Maréchale de Joyeuse, who wrote to her son Cardinal de Joyeuse in Rome, to Philip II. of Spain, and to the Carmelite General, to obtain leave for six or eight nuns to be established at Rouen. Armed with these letters M. de Brétigny went again in 1593 to Spain, when the Carmelite General only coldly said that he would give him an answer after the General Chapter had taken place. Philip II. showed much more favour to the plan, but he was advised that France was not yet in a condition of sufficient safety to send Spanish nuns there; and as the Carmelite Fathers were of the same mind M. de Brétigny was obliged to return without the nuns. Before he left Spain, however, the celebrated Mother Anne of Jesus, who may be called St. Teresa's most intimate friend, told him that he would hereafter return; that he would be successful in his quest; and that she herself would be among the nuns who should take part in the

French foundation. Much comforted by this prophecy, and by the gift of one of St. Teresa's veils,[3] M. de Brétigny returned to France to concert further measures with M. Gallemant, and for the present to wait patiently and continue to pray for the much-desired work. It is certainly very remarkable to trace out the various influences which were at work for the same end, and the difficulties which were so allowed or overruled as to conduce finally to its more complete fulfilment. First, as we have seen, there was M. de Brétigny, with his deep personal devotion to the Carmelite Order, which he wished to found at Rouen; next, the Maréchale de Joyeuse appears on the scene, but she had fixed upon Toulouse as the site of the first convent. Then M. Sublet de la Guichonnière, a royal councillor, built his own house at Noyers near Gisors so that it could be made with few alterations into a Carmelite convent, while M. Gallemant was making every preparation for the same object at Aumale. M. Gallemant, indeed, was so earnestly bent upon having French Carmelites that he wished to give up the idea of bringing nuns from Spain, but to graft the rule and constitutions which M. de Brétigny had brought to France upon the congregation of young women which he had established in his own town of Aumale, and here,

[3] Portions of this veil are still preserved at Rouen and Bordeaux.

as it were, strike St. Teresa's reform upon the stock already prepared for any kind of religious life.

M. Gallemant even sent his vicar to Rome to ask for a Bull to carry out this plan, but the Pope did not grant it, because the last of the League wars was still waging, and it was impossible to get the French King's permission. In 1598 another modification was proposed by M. Gallemant. There was at Aumale a convent of Dominicanesses which had dwindled down to three nuns, who were in extreme poverty. M. Gallemant thought of placing these three experienced women at the head of the new convent of Carmelites and making them the instructors of the girls of the place. It will be clearly seen from this idea, how little was then understood generally, even by the most learned and enlightened of the clergy, of what is known as the 'spirit' of Religious Orders, in what that delicate, subtle, and most vital element consists, or the conditions of its being. It was, in reality, as utterly impossible for Dominican nuns to convey the spirit of the Carmelite Order, as it was incongruous for Carmelites to be teaching a school. Accordingly, when the matter was referred to one or two theologians of Paris, of whom André du Val was one, they unanimously decided that the Carmelites could

never become an educational Order, and again their introduction into France was deferred. Any real work of God, when frustrated and deferred, does not, however, dwindle and perish like the frustrated works of man. On the contrary, it 'bides its time,' waiting hidden, while increasing in force and intensity of life, till its hour is come. And, as usual, when all the efforts and imaginations of the various men who had now been interested in this special work for eight years, ceased to strive, and had come to an end, the sea suddenly opened before them, and a way was made for their feet.

Among the various good things achieved by M. de Brétigny, in his journeyings to Spain, not the least was his collection of St. Teresa's writings, rules, and constitutions, and causing them to be translated out of Spanish into French. His last gain was to secure a good French translation of her life by the Jesuit Father Ribéra, which was quickly spread and eagerly discussed among a multitude of devout people of the upper classes in France. Among these readers was Madame Acarie; and, strangely enough, the book at first made but little impression upon her, although her friends had thought that it would have an absorbing interest for her. She was not even then attracted by the splendid characteristics and heroic courage of St. Teresa, but even expressed her wonder

'how a woman could ever undertake so vast a work as the reform of the Carmelite Order.'

It is needless to say that Madame Acarie soon entirely changed her mind; for while she was one day absorbed in prayer, St. Teresa herself appeared to her, or was manifested interiorly to her, as a Carmelite nun in the habit, but shining with the light of the Blessed. The Saint made known to Madame Acarie that she was to be the future instrument of establishing the Carmelite Order in France.[4] At the same time, a vision was seen in Spain by Sister Anne of St. Bartholemew, in which our Lord Himself declared that the Carmelites would soon be established in France.

Madame Acarie's humble diffidence of her own powers and fitness was so great, that the same vision was manifested to her several times before she spoke of it to Dom Beaucousin; but after a minute examination, he asked leave to consult some other experienced men on the subject, and also to examine what means there were of carrying out the work. M. Gallemant and M. de Brétigny were sent for and consulted, and M. du Val, M. de Bérulle, and Father Pacifique, an eminent Capuchin. All these remark-

[4] 'On ignore si la sainte lui apparut dans une vision corporelle, ou dans une vision intellectuelle: Dom Beaucousin, à qui elle s'en est ouverte n'en a jamais rien dit' (*Du Val*, quoted by Boucher).

able men met in a large room in the Carthusian monastery; and when every care had been taken to verify the supernatural character of the vision, it was still decided that nothing could he done at present, as Henry IV. was not on good terms with Spain. This decision was carried to Madame Acarie, who much preferred obeying her usual guides to following any supernatural manifestation, and she resolved to put the whole matter out of her mind.

But it was in vain, for about seven or eight months afterwards, St. Teresa again appeared to Madame Acarie, and with much more energy and distinctness than before, and even with a certain stern aspect of command, told her that she must moot the question of transplanting the Carmelites to France again, and that if she did so, she would succeed in the attempt. In the meanwhile, with that singular multiplication of idea, which is usually seen when any great event or fresh stirring of charity is about to be seen, the Infanta Isabella had been petitioned to allow a Carmelite convent to be founded at Dunkirk. The Infanta was quite willing to give her consent, but she imposed the condition that the Superiors should be French nuns, which the Flemish citizens refused. And, when he heard of the second appearance of St. Teresa to Madame Acarie, Dom Beaucousin again called a council of the same theologians as before,

with the illustrious addition of St. Francis de Sales, who at that time was preaching in Paris.

Perhaps it may be said that St. Francis de Sales put the keystone to the arch which had so long been building. His experience and tact in the disentanglement of delicate affairs, his keen insight and various knowledge, and the singular influence he possessed over men in high position, which sprang from so remarkable an assemblage of qualities purified by grace, were most valuable to the little assembly in Dom Beaucousin's room.[5] It must have been a deeply interesting study, even of character alone, to any one fortunate enough to be present at those meetings, where, in addition to the learned and holy men assembled, and contrary to all the usual traditions of that time, Madame Acarie was also admitted.

'Let us lay aside the reasonings of men,' Dom Beaucousin had said, 'and let us hear the words of the Holy Ghost Himself from the mouth of His humble and faithful servant, Madame Acarie.'

This sagacious Carthusian Prior afterwards declared that Madame Acarie spoke in that assembly with such wisdom and intimate knowledge, and withal, such perfect, humble modesty upon the Carmelite spirit and their rule, giving all the particulars of

[5] *Chambre claustrale.*

St. Teresa's visits, that the men who listened to her felt sure that God was indeed speaking by her lips. St. Francis de Sales was so convinced of this truth, that he immediately wrote to Pope Clement VIII. a most interesting letter, which reveals another element of impulsion to the coming of the Carmelites. This came from Catharine of Orleans, Duchess de Longueville, who had long desired to found a Carmelite convent in Paris, and who became a foundress and was always strictly united with the Order.[6] St. Francis ended his letter by asking the Pope to grant a Bull for the foundation of the Reformed Carmelites in France. Having advanced thus far, the little council thought it well to put their plans into more shape, and it was decided at M. de Brétigny's earnest entreaty, to ask for the gift of several Carmelites from Spain, making special mention of his first friend, Mother Mary of St. Joseph, who had been learning French ever since he had seen her, for that object, and was continually saying that she was now 'quite a Frenchwoman.'

Upon debating the second question of mendicant or not mendicant houses, Madame Acarie earnestly pleaded for the mendicant side, urging that that

[6] Catharine of Orleans must not be confused with her more celebrated sister-in-law, Catharine de Gonzaga, married to the Duke de Longueville, who founded the convent in the Rue du Chapon.

would be really casting themselves into the hands of God, even for the necessaries of life. But as it was feared that St. Teresa's convents were endowed, or rather, received dowries, in Spain, the men of the council demurred; and it was finally arranged by the Bishop[7] and Parliament of Paris, that each of the reformed convents was to secure revenue enough for its own support.

The third point mooted at this early stage was that ever-delicate question of the outward government of the new foundations; and here, from the first, several distinct difficulties presented themselves. There could be no government under the Carmelite Fathers, because it was not advisable to introduce fresh communities of men in the actual state of the country. It was found, however, that a Reformed Carmelite convent had been founded in Rome under the superiority of a priest of St. Philip Neri's Oratory, and it was therefore proposed that three priests, 'eminent' — as St. Francis de Sales says, alluding to them, in his letter to the Pope—'for their learning, purity of life, and skill in the management of business,' should be chosen as Superiors to govern the proposed French foundations. These three priests were MM. Gallemant, du Val, and de Bérulle.

[6] Paris was a bishopric still.

It is said that they had been specially pointed out, in the first place, by Madame Acarie as the fittest men she knew for the difficult work; and M. de Bérulle, could only be induced to accept the burthen laid upon him by her distinct and reiterated assurance that 'God would have it so.' After accepting the charge, he said: 'Well, I will be the courier for the Order, and my companions shall govern it.' When the next obvious question was raised of where the foundation should be made, another coadjutor stepped in, who had long been silently preparing for the place he was to fill. Like most other educated people in France, M. de Marillac had read the Life of St. Teresa, and as he read, he had felt interiorly urged to establish some of her nuns in his own country. He rejected the idea several times as a probable fancy, but as it returned to him again and again with clearer force, and as a friend of his who was acquainted with Madame Acarie knew that she had the same idea, M. de Marillac went to see her, and after hearing her views, offered to help her in every possible way to establish the Carmelite foundation. They had both cast their eyes upon a certain old priory of Notre Dame des Champs, in the Faubourg St. Jacques, whose church dated from the reign of Hugh Capet, and which tradition said was built

upon the site of a hermitage in which St. Denys took shelter while he was evangelizing Paris. As the old priory was large, with good cloisters and plenty of garden-ground, it was thought that a Carmelite community might be well established there at the expense of a few alterations. Just as the spot was decided upon, the Bull for which St. Francis de Sales had asked was granted by Clement VIII. A vigorous and jealous opposition to it had been raised by the Carmelite Fathers both of Spain and Italy, who perhaps were averse to seeing so fruitful a foundation pass out of their hands under another government, and perhaps also thought that they foresaw dangers from this fresh government, not of the Order, to the spirit of St. Teresa. But they opposed and protested in vain, and in 1603 the Bull was granted at an extraordinary congregation, not establishing a single convent only, but a whole Order of French Carmelites of St. Teresa's Reform. It was even laid down by Clement VIII. that the first French convent should exercise jurisdiction over the others, but as this was finally judged by Popes Gregory XV. and Clement IX. to be at variance with St. Teresa's spirit, the convent of Notre Dame des Champs was only entitled the first in honour, without jurisdiction. By this Bull Clement VIII., from the beginning,

placed all the French convents immediately under the authority of the Holy See, instituting as Superiors the three priests already named, and appointing as Visitor the General of the Carthusians, until the Reformed Carmelite Fathers could be settled in France. Thus, the object so long desired and prayed for, was at last won, and the work was actually begun. M. Choisin, who held the priory *in commendam*, renounced it in favour of the nuns; Cardinal de Joyeuse, who, as Abbot of Marmoutier, nominated to it, surrendered his rights, and after first M. de Brétigny, and then M. de Bérulle, and M. Gauthier, had made two journeys to Marmoutier, the Benedictines there finally also gave their consent, and the keys of the priory of Notre Dame des Champs were made over to M. de Marillac.

CHAPTER II.

Preparing the Plants.

THE old house in the Rue des Juifs fulfilled, as has been said, many offices. Besides housing the whole Acarie family and their friends, M. Avrillot, certain sick priests, and occasional inmates, such as Mdlle. Abra de Raconis, it contained for some time within itself the nursery of the Congregation, afterwards known as the Congregation of Ste. Geneviève. It began with three or four young women who were gathered under the all-welcoming roof of the Hotel Acarie, until the number spread to nearly twenty, or perhaps more. They lived separately in a distant part of the old, rambling house, following the order of life drawn up for them by M. Gallemant and Madame Acarie, and preparing themselves by prayer, silence, and useful work for the Carmelite rule. It is needless to say that Madame Acarie bestowed upon these young postulants the utmost amount of her cherishing care, and especially strove to cultivate in them that desire for prayerful seclu-

sion and freedom from outward disturbance by which strict union with God is nourished.

But an unforeseen difficulty sprang up in her way, from M. Acarie's bright, mirth-loving temperament. Like his eldest girl, he was never quite pleased at the silence and austerity of his house, and he liked to make inroads, every now and then, upon the 'noviceship,' to see how Madame's 'novices' were getting on, and if they wanted anything. Then, while the poor girls were modestly bending over their sewing, or saying their Office, he would break in upon their thoughts by absurd questions and laughing jests, dissipating their thoughts and scattering for the time everything like a prayerful spirit. There was one bright young girl from Troyes, whom M. Acarie specially loved to tease in this way; and once, after asking her to sing, he was actually mischievous enough to make her get up and join him in dancing about the room—not, as may be supposed, in any such rude, romping dancing as has in our own time been aptly called 'the donkey's gallop,' but some more courtly, graceful *bransle.* M. Acarie was so delighted with this achievement that he said to his wife: 'All your pious girls are starched! There is not one among them who has any sense but your Troyenne.' Madame Acarie did not venture to scold her husband, as he so richly

deserved, for the reverence due from a wife to her husband was then strictly maintained; but she expostulated with the poor girl herself, who thus frankly replied: 'What can I do, Madame? M. Acarie is master in his own house, and it is not my place to contradict him.'

It became therefore abundantly obvious that the postulants could not complete their religious training in the Hotel Acarie, for there was no probability of curing its master of his frank gaiety and mischievous love of fun. After some consultation, therefore, the Duchess de Longueville bought a roomy house in the old Place Ste. Geneviève—for long years after a cherished haunt of all lovers of the picture-like street-bits of Paris—and the young women were all removed thither, one among them being chosen as their Superior under M. Gallemant. Thus they became known thenceforward as the Congregation of Ste. Geneviève. The little flock prospered and increased exceedingly in the peace and restful silence of this house, where they were constantly visited by Madame Acarie, as well as by M. Gallemant and M. de Bérulle; for—and it is well worth remarking—throughout the whole story of the French Carmelite foundation, there was never any jealousy as to exclusive management. During the black plague of 1606 the Congregation was removed to M. Acarie's

house at Ivry, with a chaplain to hear their confessions and say Mass for them, and here also Madame Acarie visited them from time to time, and maintained over them her watchful care. The Superior first appointed for the order and regularity of the house, by Madame Acarie's desire, was Madame Jourdain, a widow who had been a small shop-keeper in Paris, but who, in the Hotel Acarie, mixed freely with Madame de Bréauté, Madame de Meignelay, and all the other great ladies, and was almost more regarded than any of them. Her humility took fright at the idea of governing the Congregation, and another postulant, Geneviève Poullain, was appointed in her stead. She was an admirable woman, but of too rigid, narrow, and severe a type; and after a short trial, M. Gallemant and Madame Acarie induced Madame Jourdain to give up her scruples and take charge of the house, which flourished under her wise, large, and gentle care.

It was not an easy matter to obtain admission into the Congregation, which, as it was intended as a nursery for the choice garden of the future Carmelite foundation, was guarded with jealous care. Madame Acarie's judgment was almost unerring as to the reception of these fresh plants, and she often refused those whom M. Gallemant or M. du Val

proposed. Of one of these, who had a considerable dowry, she said to M. du Val: 'As far as I am concerned, I would not receive her for the whole world. She is one of those prudent (political), smooth-mannered women who avoid committing faults from policy and courtesy, but not from the instincts of grace.' Of another lady who was proposed, she said, also to M. du Val: 'She is not frank; her words do not match her thoughts, and the Spirit of God does not dwell in such a heart. If she goes into a convent she will come out again; or if she remains, she will do nothing but mischief.' On the other hand, she gladly welcomed a young woman who had not been thought promising, because she was 'simple-hearted and open, which is what is needed in religious life.'

One young widow, who offered herself as a postulant, with the then large sum of ten thousand crowns to build a convent, was refused because Madame Acarie did not believe in her vocation; and it was on that occasion that she uttered certain memorable words, which it would be well to write upon the walls of every religious house: 'If a girl could bring into a convent all the world's wealth, I would not advise her being received, if she were not called by God. And if a girl were without a penny, and yet had a true vocation, I would move Heaven

and earth to make her a nun.' Another time Madame Acarie said that 'if the nuns in a convent were devoted to God, He would never let them want for needful things. He would sooner command the very stones of the house to become bread.'

One of the priests who heard confessions at Ste. Geneviève complained very much of Madame Acarie's great fastidiousness in regard to her subjects. Upon this she said to M. du Val, who had spoken to her on the matter, that this priest 'was a good man, and therefore thought everybody else was good; but that in choosing subjects for a convent, it was necessary to sound the very depths of their hearts, to see if God's Spirit dwelt there, or might dwell there when the soul had been cultivated by religious life.'

When Mdlle. de Brissac came to ask if she could possibly be received, Madame Acarie asked her if she was willing to call a young woman who was in the kitchen, 'Sister.' This was a new and most disagreeable idea to the delicate daintily brought up French girl, full of class distinctions; but after some hesitation she answered that if the religious humility necessary in a convent could not be practised without reaching that point, she was willing. Madame Acarie was very much pleased at her answer, and afterwards said that she had 'a really humble mind.'

It was some time, however, before Marshal de Brissac could accede to his daughter's views or give his consent, as he wished her to make a great marriage; but in the end, however, Mdlle. de Brissac's prayers and fixed resolve overcame her father's dislike, and he took her himself to Ste. Geneviève. Later on she became a fervent Carmelite, as Sister Angelique de la Trinité, and died early, after a most suffering illness borne with heroic fortitude, when she sent the tenderest messages to her father, and thanked him for allowing her to go into the house of God. As she was repeating the well-known words of the Vesper Hymn—

> Vitam præsta puram,
> Iter para tutum,
> Ut videntes Jesum,
> Semper collætemur,

she died without a struggle, and went joyously to her rest. Many other such souls were nurtured and trained in the nursery of Ste. Geneviève for the new Carmelite garden.

CHAPTER III.

Notre Dame des Champs.

THERE were few more ancient or more interesting spots in Paris in the seventeenth century than the grounds of the old priory of Notre Dame des Champs. Those who have wandered formerly about the narrow, crooked streets of the Faubourg St. Antoine, and are so happy as to have found an entrance to the Carmelite convent in the Rue d'Enfer, will easily be able to re-construct the scene, which was so utterly unlike the flat, vapid monotony and frivolous unsuggestiveness of the modern boulevard that has invaded the quarter. The priory stood on the rising ground which then looked down upon the picturesque roof, squares, and chapels of the University, and was quite outside the walls of Paris. A narrow street ended in clusters of village houses, nestled about the Priory like subjects seeking protection from their sovereign. From the vast court-yard could be seen first the churches of St. Magloire and St. Jacques, quaint old St. Etienne du Mont and Ste. Geneviève, and then the spires, hooded towers, and slender,

exquisite pinnacles and 'flêches' of the University with its chapels and colleges, that are now swept away. Farther off to the westward rose the great Chartreuse, and the church and surrounding separate cells of the Carthusian monks. To the south and east lay kitchen gardens, green fields, clumps of wood, and the boundary line of distant heights drawn faintly against the sky. The crypt or underground chapel under the high altar was, according to tradition, the original hermitage of St. Denys, and the first statue of our Lady known in France is said to have been set up twice by him. It had been a much-frequented sanctuary, but the League Wars and the state of the country had made it absolutely a desert. Probably it was scarcely considered safe to go beyond the usual precincts and thoroughfares of Paris, and this very quiet and desertion of frequenters made it a more favourable spot for the Carmelite foundation. But when the architect, M. Bart, who had been fixed upon by M. de Bérulle for the work, had made his examination, it was found that the Priory was in a much worse state than had been supposed. Walls, roofs, and flooring would have to be renewed, and this to such an extent that, though reluctantly, M. de Bérulle and Madame Acarie decided to retain nothing but the church as it was, and to build the convent

entirely afresh upon the plans of St. Teresa's houses, which M. de Brétigny had brought with him from Spain. The cloisters, cells, gratings, hermitages for retreats, infirmaries, and a lateral choir in the church for the nuns, were to be entirely new, and it became evident that the expenses would be very heavy. This considerable outlay did not in the least alarm Madame Acarie, and a large body of workmen were immediately put on to pull down the old priory and dig fresh foundations for the new convent.

Meantime, Mdlle. de Raconis had made up her mind to become a Poor Clare, and as there was a convent of the Order at Verdun, under the charge of the Recollect Fathers,[1] M. de Bérulle, M. Gallemant, and M. and Madame Acarie went to Verdun to see it and make the necessary arrangements for Mdlle. Raconis to go there. The journey was made very pleasant by M. Gallemant's conversation and bright, joyous sanctity, and Mdlle. Raconis concluded her faithful work at the Hotel Acarie by many happy years spent in cheerful mortification and most fervent penance as a Poor Clare. On leaving Verdun, the travelling party halted at the great church at St. Nicholas du Port, where some gentlemen of Lorraine, who happened to be in Italy when the body of St. Nicholas was translated, had brought considerable

[1] A branch of Franciscan friars.

relics of the Saint. These relics were at first placed in a small Benedictine chapel, which remains unfinished to this day, but a large church was built for the relics, towards which great devotion sprang up, and many pilgrimages had brought wealth and population to the spot. In this church, and before the shrine of St. Nicholas, M. de Bérulle and Madame Acarie went to pray.

The monks were chanting Matins in their choir, and while Madame Acarie was kneeling, absorbed in prayer and in the Office which she so devoutly loved, St. Teresa was made apparent to her for the third time, not as before, by an interior vision only, but clearly visible to the eye, and speaking audibly to the outward ear. She said some words which were deeply comforting to Madame Acarie's heart, and some other words which wounded her, at first, to the quick with pain. First, the grand courageous Saint, whom no troubles or opposition had ever daunted or turned aside, told Madame Acarie that her brave and persistent efforts to procure a Carmelite foundation in France would be rewarded with success, and then that she herself would enter the Order, but as a lay-sister.[2] It was this last communication that so grievously pained Madame Acarie.

[2] 'Sœur Converse,' a cloistered lay-sister, not a 'touriere,' or out-sister.

Not, as may be readily conceived, on account of its humble offices and low estate—for Madame Acarie would have reckoned herself happier in scrubbing the floors and washing the dishes at Notre Dame des Champs than in conversing with kings. But her enthusiastic love for the Divine Office amounted almost to a passion. Every change of chapter, versicles, and Psalms, every minutest shade and tint of illustration, every delicate inflection of voice, so to speak, by which the Church, in that truly Divine service, expresses her mind and meaning, and throws first one coloured glory and then another upon the inner sense of Scripture to illuminate the doctrine of each season as it comes—all this priceless treasury of wealth was as thoroughly known to Madame Acarie as it was dear to her soul. To be a Carmelite, and to be banished for ever from the choir! 'Long, long,' says her faithful chronicler, M. du Val, 'did she kick against the goad, like St. Paul. But at last so bravely received and accepted the cross laid upon her by the Saint, that before she got up from her knees she made a vow to enter the Order in that state of life. She related what had happened to M. de Bérulle, who was infinitely comforted by it, and he went back with fresh courage to work at the erection of the convent and the coming of the nuns.'

In 1603 there was quite an impressive ceremony

at Notre Dame des Champs. The Duchess de Nemours, representing the Queen, Mary de' Medici, laid the first stone of the convent as the primary foundress; the Duchess de Longueville and her sister, the Princess d'Estouteville, the second stone as secondary foundresses; and a few days afterwards, M. de Bérulle and M. de Marillac laid the first stone of the choir. On that occasion Madame Acarie had gone down with them and M. Biast into the foundations, and when the ceremony was over she said to M. de Bérulle, 'you will be the spiritual foundation of this building.' Then turning to M. de Marillac, she added, 'And you will be the temporal foundation.'

It was arranged that M. de Marillac and Madame Acarie should keep a joint watch over the progress of the new buildings, and that one or other of them should be responsible for the exact following out of the plans. Madame Acarie immediately took this office in hand with her usual zeal, and almost every day she was up early in the morning, and with her faithful Etienne went to Notre Dame des Champs, where she often remained nearly the whole day, standing among the workmen. She would take the plan in her hand, measure the work done, show them where it was faulty, and encourage the men by little gifts of money when they had done their

work well, or worked harder than usual. While thus employed, Madame Acarie scarcely gave herself time to eat, or she would carry a piece of bread about in her hand, eating it as she went. Every one was astonished to see that with her lame leg and weakness of back that it caused, she was able to endure such excessive fatigue. The only thing that worried her and really made her ill, was when M. Acarie —whose teasing love of power was unsubdued— would sometimes interfere and show great irritation at her going perpetually to Notre Dame des Champs and wearing herself out with overlooking the buildings. But whenever he forbade her to go, his wife obeyed instantly, though the sacrifice cost her very much. It became known to others that the greatest trial to Madame Acarie was not being able to go to the priory; and one day, the Jesuit, Father Coton, took a Spanish priest to see her, having told him how wonderfully docile and obedient she was. The Spanish Jesuit, being willing to judge for himself whether all he had heard of Madame Acarie was true, forbade her to go to overlook the buildings for a week, and although she did not owe him the slightest obedience, she scrupulously remained away during that time.

The buildings went forward with great rapidity, but the cost was so great, that although the two

foundresses, M. de Brétigny, M. de Marillac, M. Gauthier and others contributed large sums of money, the supplies ran short. Every one began to look blank except Madame Acarie herself, but she rested her hopes entirely on the providence of God. 'He has a deep and well-filled purse,' she said, 'and all the wealth of the earth is contained in it;' and when some one also hinted that the final Bull was not yet granted, she answered instantly, 'It will be. The Pope will give it us.' In reckoning with such certainty on the help of Providence, Madame Acarie did not speak rashly, or without experience. Once when she had not a single crown in hand, a sum of eighteen hundred crowns was due to the workmen at Notre Dame des Champs, but she assured the men they should be paid, and before Saturday she received the money. Her motto certainly might have been, 'Providence runneth not on broken wheels.' It was a very singular fact, that even Madame Acarie's good works witnessed against her in the minds of public men in Paris. It is not improbable that as she and her friends, Madame de Meignelay and Madame de Ste. Beuve, were strong 'Ligueuses,' deeply attached to the first loyal league, there may have been an abiding prejudice against them on the part of the half-Huguenots, half-worldly, and wholly irreligious men who crowded the Court of Henry IV.

At any rate, Madame Acarie was sued before Parliament[3] for having incited a young lady to bestow large gifts of money upon several reformed convents, as well as for wasting extravagant sums herself upon the convent at Notre Dame des Champs, and proposing to bring Spanish nuns into France. Neither of these last items, it would seem, were matters within the scope of the law, but they were embodied in the counts against her, and the last very possibly stirred up some of the old jealousy of Spain and dread of Philip II.'s policy, which might still linger about Philip III. Madame Acarie suffered terribly from this suit. In the first place, there was her husband, whose feelings were always opposed to her exceeding attraction for good works and the fatigue they caused; in the next, the publicity was dreadful to her feelings, either for good or evil. 'We women ought never to be talked about,' she said to M. du Val. 'The good done is not worth speaking of, and no one should speak evil of them. They should let us alone, just as if we were nothing at all.' As a set-off to the intense suffering and dread which Madame Acarie felt about this most unjust suit—for she had not even been aware of the young lady's generosity—St. Teresa was allowed to manifest herself

[3] The Court of Requests seems to have been under the control of the Parliament of Paris.

a fourth time to assure her that the proceedings would eventually be dropped. Madame Acarie went, in fact, as a last resource, to visit one of the judges before whom the cause was to be tried, and after receiving her with great want of courtesy, he finally listened to her reasonable explanation, and effectually interested himself in getting the matter amicably settled.

CHAPTER IV.

From France to Spain.

THE buildings at Notre Dame des Champs had been now six months in hand, the walls and cloisters of the convent were fast rising towards their completion, and a number of fervent and promising inmates were gathered at Ste. Geneviève, longing for the day when they might be put under obedience to the Constitutions of Mount Carmel, and still the coming of the Spanish nuns seemed as far off as ever. M. de Brétigny had been now one whole year in correspondence with the Carmelite General, Father Francis of the Mother of God, in Spain, and still he replied with courteous negatives, or by more courteous reference of the matter to some future day. Madame

Acarie was in deep trouble at this strange disappointment of the hopes raised by St. Teresa's visit, and she went one day, much cast down, to Ste. Geneviève, to consult the excellent little widow, Madame Jourdain, upon the subject.

'If we really cannot get Carmelite nuns from Spain, we must be satisfied with forming nuns upon the Constitutions ourselves,' said Madame Acarie.

'If you do not get nuns of the Order, you will never make anything of the Constitutions,' replied the wise little woman.

'But who will go and fetch the nuns?' asked Madame Acarie.

'I will!' Madame Jourdain instantly answered, and her words were like a flash of light to Madame Acarie, who joyfully went off to M. de Bérulle, and told him what Madame Jourdain had said. The plan was quickened, ripened. M. de Brétigny and M. Gauthier were to take charge of Madame Jourdain and one or two other French women who might form a proper escort for the nuns, and they were to carry letters from the French King to Philip III. and the French Ambassador at Madrid. Madame du Pucheul (Quesada), a Spanish cousin of M. de Brétigny, offered herself for the undertaking, and Rose Lesgu of Ste. Geneviève was to wait upon both the ladies. They left Paris quite secretly, as

Madame Acarie knew that if the Carmelite Fathers in Spain heard of their coming, they would be ready with fresh difficulties on their arrival, so that Madame Jourdain did not even take leave of her own children. M. Brétigny, therefore, started first and went into Normandy, where the Duchesse de Longueville then was, and the party met at Nantes, where the black plague was raging, and where M. Gauthier's servant took the disease, and died of it. They were obliged to remain six weeks at Nantes, on account of the violent winds, and M. Gauthier, who seems to have been much upset by losing his servant and by the long delay, left his companions, promising to join them later on with M. de Bérulle. He was also privately convinced, that without M. de Bérulle's firmer resolve and persistent charm, M. de Brétigny would never succeed in their quest. M. de Brétigny, however, always faithful and untiring, went on his way to Valladolid, where the General of the Carmelites wrote him a very angry letter, abusing him for coming so far to meet with a refusal. M. de Brétigny then also gave in, and felt that M. Gauthier had been right in feeling that he would never succeed unaided. He therefore wrote urgent letters to M. Bérulle and to Madame Acarie, imploring the former to start immediately for Valladolid.

This looked a very formidable responsibility to

M. de Bérulle, and it was only after an immense number of Masses had been said for the intention, and other indications pointed to his going, that he made up his mind to ask the King's permission, being his private chaplain, to leave the kingdom. He then started from Paris in 1604, with M. Gauthier and Edmond de Messa, and after a perilous passage from Nantes they reached Bilbao, where they were obliged to make out some Frenchman as interpreter, for none of the three could speak a single word of Spanish. This, however, as M. de Bérulle justly observed, was not the least of their inconveniences. From Bilbao they made their way over the mountain-passes and stony gullies to Burgos, where they found all post communication and relays of horses were cut off, and they were obliged to creep on, with wretched mules, towards Valladolid. Ten weary hours a day did they thus toil on, M. de Bérulle never missing a single morning's Mass, though it was with the utmost difficulty, at times, that he could obtain of the *rettore*, or curé, the necessary vestments and requisites for the service. One *rettore*, more obstinate than the rest in refusing to believe his account of himself, held out till it was almost to twelve o'clock, and M. de Bérulle, being afraid that midday would be past, said to M. Gauthier—

'I think this is really an occasion when secrecy

must be broken, and like St. Francis Borgia, when he made himself known as Duke of Gandia, I had better say that I am his Most Christian Majesty's chaplain.' Which he accordingly did, when the vestments were surrendered, and M. de Bérulle was able to say his Mass in time.

They travelled on, crossing one after another stony torrent-bed, and the brown, arid, dust-swept plains, which then, as now, make portions of Spain so utterly hideous, till on St. Matthew's day, they saw the clustering lines of white streets straggling up the steep incline towards the matchless pile of the great cathedral which told them they had at last reached Burgos. Here a deep and unexpected consolation awaited M. de Bérulle. Two-and-twenty years only had gone by since St. Teresa had established the Reformed Carmelites at Burgos, and the very Prioress whom she had appointed, and with whom she had freely conversed and commented upon the Rule, Mother Thomasine Baptist, was still Superior of the convent. The Rector of the Jesuit College also had been acquainted with St. Teresa, and was the intimate friend of her director, the wise and saintly Father Balthasar Alvarez. After saying Mass at the convent, therefore, on the morning after his arrival, M. de Bérulle took Father Coton's letter to the Jesuit's College, where the Rector instantly offered

his services as interpreter, and M. de Bérulle spent the whole day with him, and with Mother Thomasine, hearing full details of St. Teresa and her reform, and gathering largely from their conversation of the spirit and traditions of the Order. It is no wonder that towards evening, M. de Bérulle left the convent parlour full of fervent thanksgiving, saying that he had been marvellously instructed and comforted.

The next day he went on with M. Gauthier to say his Mass at the Carmelite convent at Valencia, hoping to exchange a few words there with Mother Catharine of the Holy Ghost, one of the most eminent friends of St. Teresa, and venerated throughout the neighbourhood as a saint. There was no one, however, who could speak a single word of French, and M. de Bérulle would not, therefore, disturb the nun to no purpose; and they went forward to Valladolid, where the Court then was, and where they received the most joyful welcome from M. de Brétigny, Madame du Pucheul, and Madame Jourdain, who had been waiting for them there for three months. After a general council of the little party, M. de Bérulle called on the French Ambassador, M. de Barrault, and found him most gracious. Next they both went to the King, then Philip III., who readily gave his consent to some Carmelite nuns being taken to France; and lastly, M. de Bérulle

paid a visit to the Pope's Nuncio, who gave him the damping information that the Carmelite Fathers were most adverse to his quest. M. de Bérulle urged that the Pope's Brief had actually been granted, and that this was surely sufficient authority for the Fathers. The Nuncio replied that the General of the Carmelites held the opinion that no foundations whatever could be made without the Fathers of the Order, and that the whole thing would fall through unless some of them accompanied the nuns to France.

M. de Bérulle was already aware that it was not without strong efforts that the General of the Discalced Carmelites in Spain had been able to retain the government of the nuns of St. Teresa's Reform. He had already been confronted by Mother Anne of Jesus, of whom a good deal later will be said, when he and the Chapter had endeavoured to make changes in St. Teresa's Constitutions; and her opposition had brought down upon Father Jerome Gratian, St. John of the Cross, and herself, a terrible storm of persecution. The lapse of fourteen years had scarcely yet healed those cruel wounds, and it is not surprising that Father Francis should shrink from allowing the question of any other government than his own to be mooted afresh.

Having done all that seemed possible with the

Nuncio and the French Ambassador, M. de Bérulle resolved to go to Madrid and see Father Francis himself face to face, to seek some way out of the forest of their difficulties. With M. de Brétigny and M. Gauthier, he therefore started for Madrid, although the Carmelite General had forbidden M. de Brétigny to follow him thither. The journey was a very difficult, and even dangerous one, as they were obliged to cross the pass of the Guadarrana, the highest mountain range in Spain, at the most unfavourable season of the year. But no obstacles could daunt M. de Bérulle. He cheered and heartened up his two softer-spirited companions, and they finally reached Madrid in safety. The next day they proceeded to the central house of the Carmelite Fathers, where they obtained a long and grave interview with the General. This conference would form an admirable picture, as Father Francis was a most austere and self-denied monk, full of earnestness and fervour, but with narrow views, all of which characteristics were no doubt imprinted upon his grand Spanish face. He spoke with great energy and decision against sending any of the Carmelite nuns to France; and in spite of the letters of the Nuncio, which the French travellers gave him, and those of Queen Mary de' Medici and the Duchess of Longueville, which he had already received, he told the little

embassy that they must give up all idea of taking Spanish nuns out of the country, and that they should apply to the Italian General, who would readily grant them subjects. He agreed, however, to call his consultors together, and hear what they said.

M. Gauthier, who had been charged by Henry IV. with the carrying out of the Pope's Brief, then showed it, and mentioned the name of Mother Mary of St. Joseph as one of the nuns to be asked for. The General calmly replied that she was just dead at Cueva. The relentless old Spaniard, however, did not also tell them that as soon as he had heard that Mother Mary of St. Joseph would be asked for, he had ordered her to quit her convent in Lisbon, and take this long, difficult journey, when she was exceedingly ill, on purpose to keep her out of M. de Bérulle's way. And of that journey she had actually died, as M. Gauthier took the trouble to certify by going himself to Cueva, for the Frenchmen now thoroughly knew what sort of man he was with whom they had to deal.

M. de Bérulle spent a good deal of time uselessly in endeavouring to win over the General and the Chapter to his views, and even went down on his knees, after a most eloquent appeal, to the Chapter at Segovia, to beseech the Fathers not to deprive France of the benefit of a foundation with nuns

who had learned their spirit from St. Teresa's own lips. His appeal was altogether in vain, and at another Chapter of the Order at Alcala he met with no better success.

The Nuncio, whose displeasure began to wax warm at the obstinate persistence of Father Francis in disputing his authority, now threatened to excommunicate him if he did not grant leave to the nuns to leave Spain, but the wily General was far from being at the end of his resources. He chose out six most unsuitable, aged, and timid nuns from six different houses, determined, if possible, to tire out M. de Bérulle's patience. His hopes were vain, for the three Frenchmen immediately went the round of the six convents of Madrid, Toledo, Valencia, Medina, Alba, and Cueva, to inspect the six nuns, and found them, as of course they expected, quite unfit for their purpose. They therefore went to Pastrana, where the election for the Generalate was about to take place, hoping that a fresh General would be chosen. Father Francis was, however, again elected General. M. de Bérulle took the opportunity of renewing his urgent pleading, requesting that he might take Mother Anne of Jesus and Mother Anne of St. Bartholomew to France, with three or four other nuns whom Mother Anne of Jesus should herself choose. This bold demand

threw the whole Chapter into consternation, and there was a general outcry that the Carmelite Order in Spain was going to be ruined for the sake of France, and that it would never recover such a blow. The General and his counsellors seem to have given such full vent to their exasperation on this occasion, that the 'hot and hasty Spaniard' of nature overcame the influences of grace, and M. de Bérulle was actually insulted in Dr. Quesada's house. Even Dr. Quesada's servant was so incensed at the way the Fathers behaved, that he wanted to turn them out of the house then and there, which M. de Bérulle, of course, would not allow.

He merely stood in the doorway when they went out, and said with perfect courtesy and self-control: 'My Fathers, another time I hope you will bear in mind that God the Son said: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart."' He wrote to Madame Acarie that he 'was learning how to be obstinate, and was determined to return to France without any nuns at all, rather than bring unsuitable, ordinary subjects.' This made Mother Anne of Jesus exclaim that 'that little Dom Pedro had plenty of stuff in him, and their holy Mother (St. Teresa) would have liked him right well!' There is no doubt that 'Dom Pedro' thoroughly deserved the commendation, for never did man work harder or

spare himself less than M. de Bérulle. He consulted Father Oïeda, Father Ribadineira, and several other priests of known sanctity, especially the Dominican, Father Bañes, as to the capacity and character of Mother Anne of Jesus; and one and all assured him that throughout Spain he could not find such a nun to establish the French foundation in the Carmelite true spirit of simplicity, courage, and the love of prayer. Father Bañes even said that Mother Anne was noways inferior to St. Teresa in spiritual gifts, while her natural qualities were even superior to those of the Saint.

Several eminent Carmelite Fathers had now been won to M. de Bérulle's side and encouraged him to persevere. It was impossible not to be won by his courageous perseverance and the meekness and self-control which he invariably showed, while quite maintaining the dignity of his position. There was then at Madrid a very well-known lay-brother, Brother Francis of the Infant Jesus, who was popularly reckoned in the capital as a saint; and one day, when M. de Bérulle went to see the General, Brother Francis came running to him in the courtyard, and embracing him said: 'You will have the Mothers you have asked for; you will have good nuns; yes, indeed, really good!'

'Ah, Brother! And who has told you so?'

'The Infant Jesus,' replied the Brother, with the simplest faith; and immediately M. de Bérulle felt that a singular calm and peace of soul had succeeded to the anxiety and want of light under which he had been suffering. He had need of every ray of light he could gather; for the Carmelite Fathers, enraged at his persistence and discernment of their plans, now passed all bounds, and scrupled not to set it about that M. de Bérulle was a Huguenot, and was trying to pervert the Carmelite nuns to his false opinions. In this extremity of persecution, which he knew if it gained ground would entirely break up all his plans, M. de Bérulle was literally alone. M. Gauthier was a layman, and M. de Brétigny, though an excellent pious man, had no firmness of character, and was rather of opinion that they should return to France. To complete that thorough isolation and sense of forsakenness, which is so often allowed to befall God's instruments before the completion of any great work, M. de Bérulle received no letters from Madame Acarie, from M. de Marillac, or from his mother; and he was left to conjecture that some great private loss or some check, or change of plans, had occurred in Paris also, while circumstances were utterly discouraging in Spain.

M. de Bérulle was not discouraged. Though still young, he had known what suffering of the soul

means, and he had also learnt the priceless lesson how to lean upon God. He had early been taught by experience that the strongest human help, in comparison with His, is as 'a tottering wall and a broken fence;' and casting the affair now afresh into His hands, this brave priest continued to fast, to pray, and to wait. It is said that he had made a vow of perpetual abstinence until he had obtained from God the success of his undertaking, and although the strongest inhabitants of Madrid shrank from exposing themselves to the burning heat of midday, M. de Bérulle went out every day to the Cathedral in the fierce noon glare, and there, prostrate before the altar of our Lady, he repeated again and again, with childlike faith, but with a strong man's pleading, '*Monstra te esse Matrem!*—Show thyself to be a Mother. Show thyself to be the Mother of Jesus, and as this foundation will be to His glory, obtain it of Him. Show thyself to be my Mother, and listen to my fervent prayer. Show thyself to be the Mother of this holy new generation, and bring about this good work for France.' Such, according to the Pontoise manuscript was the purport of M. de Bérulle's daily prayer. From the Cathedral he would go on to the Jesuits' Church of St. Michael, the Guardian Angel of France, whose intercession he also implored; and lastly, he would

end with the Church of the Clerks Regular, whose motto it is to 'ask for nothing, and to possess nothing,' in accordance with which he threw himself entirely upon God. Even after his return to his lodgings, M. de Bérulle still continued his intercessory prayers, either in the garden, or in his own room, or wherever no one could see him, and lie prostrate upon the floor, or erect with his arms extended in the form of the Cross; and in this way he spent the greater part of the night.

After awhile, it occurred to him to make a second pilgrimage to St. Teresa's tomb. It really seemed as if the great reformer of the Carmelite Order was personally sustaining him in many ways at this time; for her own daughters, especially Mother Anne of Jesus, Mother Anne of St. Bartholomew, and Mother Isabel of the Angels, were continually pleading to her to obtain their foundation in France, and even wrote the most pressing letters to the General on the subject. Several of his own consultors were also of the same mind. At length the Nuncio became so justly indignant at the prolonged contempt of the injunctions of the Holy See, in his person, that he wrote to the General ordering him to send the nuns who had been mentioned in a week's time. Even then the haughty Spaniard delayed his submission for about three weeks more,

when the Nuncio sped his final weapon. He sent an express messenger from the Nuncio's palace at Madrid, with powers to depose the General and pass sentence of major excommunication unless he returned his assurance of submission by the bearer.

This was an unexpected thunderbolt, and Father Francis then yielded at once, though still adding three conditions of his own, one of which was entirely beyond his province. First, he stipulated that the nuns should be properly escorted to Paris by the three gentlemen and three ladies who had come for them. Secondly, that they should remain always under the control of the Carmelite Fathers. Thirdly, that in case of their wishing to return to Spain, the Duchess of Longueville should send them back to their several convents free of cost. While the General was writing his submission, Mother Anne of St. Bartholomew had a distinct vision of a beautiful figure, clad in shining mail, who said to her, 'Courage! Do not hesitate to go forward,' and she was made aware at the same time that it was St. Michael, the Guardian Angel of France. This courageous woman, however, who had never before been many miles from her own home, and whose habits from her earliest years had been those of modest retirement and seclusion from the stir of the world, seems to have needed no spur to her

movements in leaving Spain for a foreign land. She and Mother Anne of Jesus signed the paper, witnessing to their readiness to go to Paris, on the 12th of August. The document was in the Nuncio's hands two days later, and was sent on immediately to M. de Bérulle, who could scarcely believe that the hour had at last struck for which he had so long and so earnestly prayed. He sent out then and there for mules, and for a carriage for the ladies, and they all turned their backs with joy upon Valladolid.

CHAPTER XIII.

From Spain to France.

THE travellers journeyed on through the night as fast as horses and mules could carry them towards Salamanca, and at dawn beheld with delight the walls and towers and noble cathedral of that once learned city rising before them. Their whole thoughts, however, were so soon concentrated upon St. Joseph's Convent, where they were to take up Mother Anne of Jesus, that they had no eyes for the beauty of the old city. For forty years this noble woman had toiled on bravely, sustaining the strict observance of the Carmelite rule, in spite of

the fiery storm of petty persecution and various troubles brought on her by the Calced, or unreformed Fathers. Whoever would wish to know what these trials amounted to, and discern by way of warning, how far narrowness of views and natural obstinacy of character can undermine charity, should make themselves acquainted with the life of St. John of the Cross. The Calced Fathers, knowing how eager Mother Anne of Jesus was for the French Carmelite foundation, had kept her in the most profound ignorance of the pending negotiations, so that when M. de Bérulle and his companions presented themselves at the Convent of St. Joseph, they were refused admittance as persons unauthorized and unknown. Not seeing any means of telling her what papers he had brought, M. de Bérulle went into the convent chapel to pray and hear Mass, and after a while heard some rather loud talking in the sacristy. A thought struck him, and when the gentleman who had been talking came out of the sacristy, he asked, and was told that Mother Anne of Jesus was there. He and M. de Brétigny, therefore, went in to see her, told her the reason of their coming, and made known to her the General's consent to her going to Paris. At first, seeing how completely the hand of God was in the matter, Mother Anne said she was ready to set out immediately, even without taking

leave of the Carmelite Fathers, but, as the chronicler quaintly observes, 'as there are twelve hours in the day,' Mother Anne changed her mind all at once, and was struck with dismay at the idea of going so far away from her own land without any of the Fathers to whom she could speak or consult upon the trials that might overwhelm her soul. In this point probably, age told upon her; for although her fortitude had been unshaken throughout real trials for the last forty years, imaginary difficulties now seemed to have power to daunt her heart. She was still talking to M. de Bérulle, when Mother Isabel of the Angels, who was Sub-prioress, came in, and asked Mother Anne if she might speak to him too. When M. de Bérulle heard Mother Isabel's name, he surprised her very much by exclaiming, 'Ah, then, Mother, you are also one of the nuns named in the "obedience!"' It had already been interiorly made known to Mother Isabel that she should go to France, and she had for some time bravely devoted herself to this mission in a strange land.

Much patience, however, was still needed to perfect the work, for the Carmelite Fathers, as usual, began to crowd fresh obstacles in the way, and M. de Bérulle went back to Valladolid with M. Gauthier to see the Nuncio, leaving M. de Brétigny in charge of the French ladies. While they were

gone, Madame Jourdain and her companion went often to the convent, but when it had leaked out that they intended, if they could, to carry off the Prioress, the nuns were very much displeased, and one day as they rang the sacristy bell, a portress told them very shortly that none of the nuns ever came to talk at that turn (the turnabout which was used for messages, parcels, &c.). They then went meekly to the other entrance, and were repaid for their patience by finding Mother Beatrice of the Conception there, who was equally delighted to talk to them, and made them promise to ask that she too might go to France. Mother Beatrice had once when infirmarian nursed Mother Anne of Jesus, who was then so ill that she received the Viaticum. When one day she asked Mother Beatrice to bring her a certain cross, probably containing relics, for her to venerate, Mother Beatrice said, 'She would do so if Mother Prioress would promise to take her to France.' Mother Anne was very much surprised at this request, for the French foundation had been kept as strict a secret as possible, and the community in general knew nothing whatever about it. She therefore answered, 'Eh, Sister, what are you talking about? You see that I am at the point of death, and it is a fine time to talk of going to France!'

'No matter,' Mother Beatrice, with true Carmelite frankness, replied; 'let us hope that God will give you your health again, and that we shall go.' And still pleading and persuading, she prevailed upon Mother Anne to give her word that she should go. As soon as M. de Bérulle knew of this fact, he begged that she might be one of the six nuns chosen, and the General gave his consent. M. de Bérulle now proposed that they should start immediately, and take up the three other nuns on the way. But Mother Anne of Jesus objected to leaving the convent till the Carmelite Fathers were ready, of whom the General had named three as about to escort them on the road. M. Gauthier then put in his word, and said that he had no instructions from the King of France as to the Carmelite Fathers, and that the two excellent priests who were with him were amply sufficient for all that the nuns required. However, as Mother Anne of Jesus begged that the Fathers might at least start with them, M. Gauthier gave way.

It was thought, as Mother Anne had the reputation of being a very holy person, and the townspeople had been in the habit of sending for things that she had worn or carried about her to heal them when they were sick, that opposition might be made to her leaving Salamanca. In fact, the towns-

people in their jealousy had already tried to pick a quarrel with M. de Bérulle's servants, and it was therefore decided that they should take their departure about two o'clock in the morning. At midnight, M. de Brétigny's servant went all across Salamanca in mortal fear of the great dogs which were let loose to prowl as unpaid police at night, to the convent of the Carmelite Fathers, and brought back the two who were to be of the party. The two monks then mounted the two horses that were standing ready saddled for them, and went forward with M. de Bérulle, M. de Brétigny, and M. Gauthier. The nuns were carefully escorted to one of the carriages, and the French ladies to the other, and before dawn they were all nearly thirty miles from Salamanca.

An intense amount of toil and fatigue had been undergone before this final success had been secured. But now, when M. de Bérulle and his companions saw the party of nuns who had been granted—Anne of Jesus, Isabel of the Angels, Beatrice of the Conception, Eleanor of St. Bernard, Anne of St. Bartholomew, and Isabel of St. Paul, and recognized with almost unspeakable joy that they were carrying back to France the carved and graven stones of the great work for which they had toiled and prayed for so many years, they could not contain the full out-

burst of joyous thanksgiving. Again and again their glad voices broke into the chant, 'Then was our mouth filled with gladness, and our tongue with joy. The Lord hath done great things for us: we are become joyful.'[1] While M. de Bérulle lifted up his voice in praise without a thought of the part his own co-operation had wrought in the work, the Carmelite Procurator was never weary of praising him to others, dilating upon 'his virtue, prudence, perseverance, and greatness of mind—powers evidently given him from above, and which nothing could resist.'

For two days the strange little cavalcade made its way through the steep, rugged ways of the mountain chain bordering the Adaga, and passed by the ever-to-be-remembered 'Cuatro Postes,' the memorial standing upon the spot where Teresa and Rodriguez of Ahumada, setting off as children to convert the Moors, were overtaken by their uncle. Then they descended upon Avila, Avila the Beautiful, with its walls and towers, and triple-crowned cathedral, its marble palaces of the blue-blooded grandees, Medina Cœli, Miraflores, and Abrantes, with its many-fountained courtyards and its myriad turrets

[1] 'Repletum est gaudio os nostrum : et lingua nostra exultatione. Magnificavit Dominus facere nobiscum : facti sumus lætantes' (Psalm cxxv. 2, 4).

and cupolas and belfries glittering in the dawn, and chiming out the *Ave* with their silver bells. Like the Eastern Magi on their quest, they passed rapidly and almost unheeding by all these to the Convent of St. Joseph, over which it is said that for more than a month a coronal of the brightest stars had hung night and day, signifying the lights of the Carmelite Order, who were about to be transplanted and to shine henceforth in France. 'And of these six stars,' says Mother Anne of St. Bartholomew, when narrating the event, 'I was the very least of all.'

The party was welcomed by the chaplain of the convent, his sister, and two of his nieces,[3] who could not sufficiently show their joy at receiving such saintly guests. The nuns rested there some little while, as Mother Anne heard that there was a nun in a Carmelite convent not far off who could speak French. This was Mother Eleanor of St. Bernard, of a noble Bavarian stock, whom M. de Brétigny, with one of the Carmelite Fathers, went to see, and proposed to her to devote herself to France. While they were gone on this errand, the others filled up their time with visiting what had literally become 'holy places' at Avila: the Augustinian convent where St. Teresa

[3] 'Saint homme assez à son aise, et qui avoit avec luy Mademoiselle sa sœur et deux de ses niepces trés-vertueuses' (MS. de Bourges, p. 88).

had been educated; the Convent of the Incarnation where she had made her vows, and where the vision of our Lord had appeared to her, claiming her as His bride; and that of St. Clare, under whose roof the first brave nuns of the Reform had been sheltered.

Julian d'Avila still lived near the Convent of St. Clare, and, though bent with extreme old age and many infirmities, the saintly priest, so long St. Teresa's confessor, received the little colony with the frankest gladness and courtesy. He told Mother Anne, amongst other things, that the Life which had been published of St. Teresa did not contain a quarter of the miracles God had vouchsafed to work in her soul, and that if he were but spared for a short time longer he would publish them fully to the world. He did, in fact, just finish his narrative before his death, and after having been quite lost, a copy of his work has lately been recovered in Spain. The chief delight, however, of the travellers was the free use they made of the opportunity of talking to the nuns of St. Joseph's. The Sub-Prioress was St. Teresa's niece, whom she had herself brought up from childhood, and who was utterly unspoilt by anything like knowledge of the world and its ways.

The first feast-day of the Reform, the 24th of August, St. Bartholomew's day, fell while the French nuns were still at St. Joseph's, and the festival was

kept with wonderful pomp and splendour. That day forty-two years, St. Teresa had given the habit to the four first Sisters of the strict Carmelite observance; and already they were going to send out a colony into another country. It is not astonishing to learn that after lauding St. Teresa and her daughters in his panegyric, the preacher, as Madame Jourdain graphically says, should have 'fallen upon' the French ladies, whose courage and constancy had been so remarkably crowned, and his glowing praise forced them to hide their blushing faces under their Spanish mantillas. The Bishop, also, paid them most courteous attention, and when M. de Bérulle and M. Gauthier dined with him, he tried to make up for not being able to ask the ladies by sending them some savoury dishes from his table.

M. de Brétigny at length returned with Mother Eleanor of St. Bernard, and all their thoughts then turned towards France. Father Francis once more appeared on the scene to take a final leave of his daughters, and exhorted them most solemnly never to lose their spirit or change St. Teresa's rules. Madame du Pucheul and Madame Jourdain, who had not the slighest idea of the kind of man he was, begged him to allow Mother Casilda of St. Anne to go with them from Avila, and the whole party humbly kneeling at his feet, begged for a small portion of

St. Teresa's relics to carry with them as a blessing to the French foundation. To each and all of these requests, Father Francis, after his manner, returned the briefest and sternest refusals. He accompanied them, however, about a mile and a half on the road from Avila, where he gave the nuns his last blessing and turned back, leaving them in charge of the two Carmelite Fathers who were to acccompany them to Paris. The band then, avoiding Valladolid for fear of fresh hindrances, pushed on towards Burgos, meeting with extraordinary difficulties and hardships on the way. The roads were terribly hard, the carriages and drivers not fit for their work, and the difficulty of providing food for twenty-two people (including drivers and muleteers) and eighteen mules was found to be unexpectedly great. On arriving late one evening at a small village, there was not even a bit of bread to be bought for supper. The gentlemen searched every likely house till they were weary and spent, but no one was able or willing to supply their wants. At last Edmond de Messa took a bag and went round to every house, asking alms for the love of God. This expedient was sure to succeed in Spain, and the bag was soon filled; but the incident taught M. de Bérulle that in addition to all their other burthens he should be obliged to take upon him that of taking provisions from place to place.

There were other difficulties which even Edmond de Messa, with all his unwearied self-sacrifice, could not smooth away, though they doubtless served to furnish some amusement to the nuns as well as to Madame Jourdain, whose correspondence during this journey is well worth studying. The Carmelite Provincial, who was named Father Joseph, was not very well pleased at being forced to take a journey which obliged him to undergo so much fatigue and inconvenience. He liked to dine punctually at the same time every day, and if he found that the stages proposed would put off his dinner longer than usual, he positively refused to go on till they had dined. This continual delay was vexatious to the French priests, who were accustomed to put all bodily wants aside when any higher object was in view; and as they were obliged to make a good many such short days, it added enormously to their expenses. Father Joseph had also a perverse, ungracious temper, and was very jealous of M. de Bérulle's influence, which he showed by always riding up along side of the nuns' carriage when M. de Bérulle was talking to them. The driver, who was possibly not best pleased at Father Joseph's way of accosting him, and the frequent delays, always gave his mules on such occasions a Spanish hint to push on,[4] so that when-

[4] The usual custom in Spain, where cruelty to animals is an abiding disgrace, is to throw sharp stones at the beasts in harness.

ever the good Father's mule trotted up to the carriage window, both teams scampered off as fast as they could lay their legs to the ground. 'Which,' says Madame Jourdain, with her French keenness of malice, 'the Frenchwomen soon perceived,' and no doubt with the keenwitted brightness of their nation thoroughly enjoyed. In this way they slowly made out the way over dusty plain and stony gully, and finally reached Burgos.

It may be feared, indeed, that the 'Frenchwomen' showed their amusement somewhat too openly, for at Burgos, the terrible Father Joseph announced to M. de Bérulle that he must immediately lodge two thousand louis d'ors with some safe person as security for the return of the nuns to Spain, or he would not allow them to go a step further. As the whole party could not between them muster such a sum, this was a serious hindrance, but happily, M. de Brétigny had friends who knew him at Burgos, and an agreement was drawn up that satisfied the Provincial. At Burgos, M. de Bérulle received the last addition to his party in Mother Isabel of St. Paul. Father Joseph sent for her to the parlour at eight o'clock in the evening, and told her she was to go to France with the party of nuns who were lodged for the night in the convent. Mother Isabel merely replied: 'Just as your Reverence pleases,' and at four o'clock

in the morning she was packed into the carriage with the rest.

The fatigues of this terrible journey began by this time to be cruelly felt by Mother Anne, who suffered grievously from sciatica and gout, and had been partially paralysed. What with the long hours of cramped confinement in a carriage, now with five others, the irregularity of meals, and the badness of the food, her sufferings began at times to be excruciating. The two Mothers Eleanor and Isabel were also very ill with intermittent fever, which attacked Madame Jourdain afterwards, with the addition of agonizing pain in all her limbs. With all these sufferings these heroic women bravely kept up their evenness of spirits, and with the same serene faces as usual obeyed the little bell, which, according to St. Teresa's injunctions, was rung in the coach exactly as in the cloister; so that Divine Office, mental prayer, silence, and recreation succeeded each other exactly as if they had been quietly at home in their convents. Both Mothers Anne and Anne of St. Bartholomew had many a time accompanied St. Teresa on her journeys, and they strove which should the best imitate the punctual attention to the rule, and the bright, graceful cheerfulness with which she had beguiled so many hours of painful travel.

Mother Anne took every difficulty and fatigue,

as far as she could, upon her own shoulders. She invariably got out to walk at the worst places, dragging her half-helpless limbs along with heroic courage, and cheering herself and her companions at such times by visiting every little church within reach of the road that they passed. During the halts and siestas for mules and men she led her little band of nuns to sweep the dirty churches, and to look over the linen in the sacristies, which they too often found in so disgraceful a state that the nuns were full of grief to see our Lord treated with such dishonour. On one of these occasions, as they went into a little village church and knelt down before the lamp-lit sanctuary, Mother Anne suddenly said, 'The Blessed Sacrament is not here!' And on examination it was found that, through the neglect and carelessness of the parish priest, the Sacred Host had become mouldy, so that the accidents only remained in the ciborium. Many times, when the brave little cavalcade was suddenly overtaken by some of the terrible thunder-storms of Spain, Mother Anne would open the leathern coverings of the carriage and sprinkle holy water in the air, when it was observed that the lightning ceased to flash so vividly and the storm dispersed.

Madame Jourdain, too, played her part manfully in this memorable journey. Between the intervals

of racking pains of back and head when the fever-fits were on her, she suffered almost more cruelly from the faintness and exhaustion of weakness, when the shaking and jolting of the carriage was almost more than she could bear. Many a time, when she could scarcely drag herself out of it during the halts to provide for the meals and comfort of the nuns, or when she was just fainting at a bad pass over a bridgeless torrent or broken road, M. de Bérulle would come up and rebuke her sharply for her want of charity to the Spanish ladies, or for her childish cowardice. Madame Jourdain invariably answered most humbly that she was very sorry, and would try to be wiser, but she never enlightened him as to her own state of health. This went so far, and the fiery little 'Dom Pedro's' tongue was so sharp that Rose Lesgu at length thought it incumbent upon her to tell him how ill Madame Jourdain was.

As soon as she had spoken M. de Bérulle took every possible care of Madame Jourdain, and if he saw that a rough bit of road was coming he would stop the carriage, and make Madame Jourdain mount his own mule, and ride over the stony interval of the way, while he walked. The nuns were so full of affectionate admiration for this excellent woman that they united in constant prayer for her cure, and before they left Spain they had the satisfaction

of seeing Madame Jourdain quite recovered, and as bright as Mother Isabel of the Angels, who was the joy and life of the whole party.

It needed some such brightness to while away the wretchedness they one and all endured, for the roads were not the least adapted for any kind of carriage, and at that season the mud sometimes nearly covered the wheels, and sometimes the stones, hidden by the mud, upset both carriages at once, and they could scarcely be dragged upright again. It must have been diverting then to see M. de Bérulle, who at such times would get off his mule, and with true French courtesy, hand the nuns out of the mud, or even offer them his arm, when they would shrink back, half-alarmed, half-amused, never having been accustomed to these demonstrations of politeness. Very often, too, the inns were quite full, and there were no beds, or only barely beds enough for the nuns to be had, and then the whole French party, men and women, would distribute themselves on the floor, or on a few chairs, and even inside the carriages, which they had just been so glad to leave. They were all often more tired in the morning than they had been over night, and the excessive fatigue brought on fresh attacks of fever and gout in Mother Anne.

At last, however, with many adventures and escapes,

they got as far as Tolosa, where the alcalde met them with great pomp, and escorted them out of the town again with a dozen or so of the principal Tolosians on horseback. The procession had not long cleared the city walls when it reached a narrow bridge, which had lost its rail, spanning on one side a deep ravine, while on the other the wall of rock rose up sheer. 'The driver of the nuns carriage,' says Madame Jourdain, 'had drunk rather too much of the good red wine of Navarre,[4] and having, as usual, executed a hailstorm of whip-cracking to celebrate his exit from Tolosa, the mules started off at a pace beyond his control, and rushed in a heap across the bridge. The horror-stricken occupants of the other carriages and the escort of gentlemen cried out that the nuns were lost, but to their amazement they saw the carriage wheels on the side of the ravine rolling round and round in the air, so that the carriage arrived safely on the opposite side, where it upset in a ditch full of briars. When the alcalde and his troop had galloped up they found that they had only to set the carriage upright and hand out the nuns. Two of them had a few bruises to show, but Mother Anne of St. Bartholomew said she felt as if our Lord had carried them over the bridge in His arms. Meanwhile the drivers and

[4] 'Le bon vin clairet de Navarre.'

muleteers, terribly frightened, were abusing each other at the top of their voices, the muleteers saying that they should give up the whole thing and go home, as they were afraid the alcalde would put them in prison for their gross carelessness and misconduct. Mother Anne succeeded in calming the storm; she besought the alcalde to pardon them all and overlook the accident, and the little cavalcade then went peacefully forward on its way.

It must not be imagined, however, that 'hairbreadth 'scapes' and upsets into briary ditches with muddy roads, were the leading features in the recollection of this remarkable journey. There were more than enough of these, but the higher and inner incidents which blossomed and developed on the way completely submerged the material mishaps in their minds. To whatever towns the nuns came the news of their coming and the object of their exodus travelled before them, and at the cry, 'The saints have arrived!' the whole population turned out of their houses and lined the streets, the bells of all the churches rang out merry peals, the organs played, the priests met them in procession chanting Psalms, and the coming of St. Teresa's nuns was treated as if it was some high festival in which every one must join with a rejoicing heart. Nothing could bear such marvellous testimony to the inherent en-

during faith and loyal devotion to Catholic tradition in Spain, as the simple details narrated by Madame Jourdain as they passed along. And certainly, witnessing such demonstrations as these, abundantly refreshed and comforted the devoted little escort, who had endured so much to secure their end.

The intimate knowledge of each other, which sprang up, unchecked, between the nuns and their companions, was another source of enjoyment to both. More acquaintance with Christian progress, more insight into Christian virtue, was revealed by Mother Anne's cheerful heroism, Mother Anne of St. Bartholomew's unfailing sweet serenity, Mother Eleanor of St. Bernard's quiet self-sacrifice, than could have been gained by many books or much hearing of sermons. Mother Eleanor, with her warm loving heart, deeply attached to her own family, offered the sacrifice of not turning a little way out of the road to see her aged father, because the 'obedience' given by the General was worded that she was to go 'straight to France.' Yet these heroic acts were not done as if on purpose, or for any effect of 'edification,' or because it might be expected of nuns, but because having 'so learned Christ,' they had also learned so to live that He dwelt within them, and therefore they could act in no other way. Thus this French escort felt, as an old historian[5]

[5] Habert.

says, 'as if they were already in Heaven, and holding companionship with the Blessed.'

It was no ordinary virtue which sustained these Spanish nuns in leaving their peaceful convents at this time, for in the hope of exciting their dislike to their exodus from their own country, the Carmelite Fathers had told them that France was a country completely lost to the faith and given over to heresy, and that the only treatment they must expect to meet with was a series of insults, tortures, and final martyrdom. But, like all other want of truthful single dealing in the affairs of God, this statement exactly defeated its own end, for it excited in these fervent women not only an inextinguishable desire for the crown of such a death, but a fervent resolve to undertake the mission proposed to them. It must never be forgotten, therefore, that throughout the whole of their comfortless and wearisome journey, during which they never asked a single question nor propounded one of their natural fears, these heroic women imagined that unheard of torments, ignominy, and some terrible unknown form of death, would meet them in France.

After more perils than can be given in detail in Biscay they reached Irun, and just as they were on the borders of French soil the drivers and muleteers ran restive, and declared that nothing should induce

them to cross the boundary line of Spain. In vain did M. de Bérulle and M. Gauthier show them the terms of their engagement, which bound them to go as far as Bordeaux; threats, entreaties, and reasoning were all equally useless, and M. de Brétigny at length had recourse to M. Arbales, the Commandant of Irun, who was one of his numerous Spanish friends, and also post-master, or comptroller of the post-houses. He soon took the matter in hand, and obliged both men and mules to carry out their engagement. The former, who, as often happens, were the most brutal of the two, revenged themselves by pouring out oaths, curses, and blasphemies during the whole extra distance, which must have been a true penance to the nuns. M. Arbales accompanied the party as far as the Bidassoa, and to every horrible imprecation of the muleteers calmly answered, 'Amen.'

They passed this, the boundary river, in boats, and directly they landed on the French side Mother Anne exclaimed: 'Now I am indeed a Mother!' The very next thing that occurred proved that she had already received the secret grace that fitted her for guidance. The nuns had been much pressed to delay their crossing over to France for a day or two, to avail themselves of the hospitality of the last Spanish nobleman on the frontier, and take a little rest, of which the whole party stood in much

need. But Mother Anne had strongly opposed their doing so, and had said that if they faltered ever so little in their purpose, they should all be obliged to go back again to their convent in Spain. And, strange to say, they had scarcely got well clear of the banks of the Bidassoa, than a courier overtook them from the Nuncio at Madrid, forbidding them to go a step further. The fact was that Monsigneur Gymnasio had been so severely blamed by the relations of the nuns who had left Spain, that in a moment of weakness—or of policy, which, being entirely human, is only another weakness—he had made out the order for their return. Happily they were now beyond his jurisdiction, and, turning their backs on the courier, the little band went their way rejoicing, and singing *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes; Laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus.* At St. Jean de Luz, so well known to all travellers in the Pyrenees or visitors at Biarritz, the nuns descried a little village and church on a height, where they stopped to hear Mass; and as they were walking down the hill again, Madame Jourdain became aware of a sweet, powerful fragrance which seemed to float round them. It so breathed into her the spirit of prayer that she was sure it was supernatural, and when she spoke of it to one of the nuns, she replied, she said, as if it were a known thing, 'Oh, yes, it is

our holy Mother Teresa, who is here accompanying us and welcoming us to France!'

As a set-off to this most beautiful and characteristic welcome, the nuns were overtaken outside the town by a violent storm of wind, rain, and terrific darkness. It soon became impossible even to see the road, and the muleteers refused to stir a step farther. M. de Bérulle and M. Gauthier, unfortunately, had gone on to Bayonne to announce the coming of the nuns to M. de Grammont, who ordered the city gates to be left open later than usual for them. Meanwhile, all unconscious of this honour, the nuns and their escort were sadly spending the night crammed into one carriage, in order to leave the other free for the gentlemen. One of them brightly made a joke of the whole adventure, but it was far from looking like a joke to the poor Provincial, Father Joseph. Much aggrieved at the catastrophe, and probably dinnerless and extremely wet, he dolefully uplifted his indignant cry: 'This is not bringing nuns to found a convent; it is bringing them to be killed!'[6]

Meantime the gates of Bayonne were standing wide open, and M. de Bérulle and M. Gauthier waited and waited in vain. They walked some way forward on the road, lit torches and made bonfires,

[6] 'No es ele bar monjas para fondar, sino para matar.'

but all in vain; and they were perforce obliged to wait patiently till early daybreak, when they dispatched a messenger to hear what the matter was, and at last saw the carriages lumbering along the road and safely entering Bayonne. And then, once more, so marvellous a protection was granted as to convince even the most unbelieving witnesses that the transplanting of the Carmelites was the work of God. The nuns' carriage was once more stupidly driven against one side of the drawbridge, the wheels went over the edge, and the heavy coach was seen hanging entirely upon the drawbridge chains. The assembled crowds shouted and cried out, the chains strained even to snapping, but help arrived in time, and the nuns were rescued from their imminent peril. At Bayonne Mother Anne was delighted to find the Catalan Provincial, who had had orders from the General to take her as far as Paris.

It was an excellent exchange from Father Joseph, for the Catalan Father proved to be a kindly and courteous man, knowing the ways of life, and how to accommodate himself to others. He was also very pleasant in his companionship to M. de Bérulle and his friends. It is amusing to learn that, having so far survived the perils of the journey, Father Joseph was most anxious to get a glimpse of Paris, and even talked of going on with the nuns, in spite

of his orders from the General. In the end, however, he was overruled to a better mind, and returned to Castile, let us hope, in greater comfort than he had found hitherto. It may almost be said, not having suffered the inconveniences of his presence, that we part with Father Joseph with regret.

Before making an entry into Bordeaux, M. de Bérulle exchanged his two rough, broken-down, and travel-stained Spanish conveyances for two plain, roomy, close French carriages, such as would not excite attention and remark; and in these the party of ladies drove to the house of a Huguenot nobleman who had offered them hospitality. As he came out to welcome the nuns getting out of their carriage, seeing them shrouded in their thick veils, he thought it might be more agreeable to them not to acknowledge their presence, and therefore bowed only to the French ladies. But Mother Anne had not expected this, and drily asked Madame Jourdain if these were French manners? That charming little woman mischievously replied in the affirmative, but added that the want of the bow argued no rudeness whatever on his part. 'How horrified she would have been,' added Madame Jourdain, 'if she had known that this very gentleman was a heretic!'—the first heretic, probably, we may observe, that Mother Anne had ever seen. Nevertheless, M. de

Bérulle left the party installed in his house, and then, taking courteous leave of Mother Anne, he posted off to Fontainebleau, where the Court then was, to give an account of his adventures and success to the King.

BOOK THE THIRD.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.—Paris and Nôtre Dame des Champs again	169
CHAPTER II.—The First Grafts	178
CHAPTER III.—The Spanish Prioress	190
CHAPTER IV.—'Mademoiselle Acarie' a Novice	201
CHAPTER V.—First Swarms. Pontoise	209
CHAPTER VI.—Sister Mary	221
CHAPTER VII.—Within the Grating	230
CHAPTER VIII.—'Until Death'	237

CHAPTER I.

Paris and Nôtre Dame des Champs again.

FROM Bordeaux the Carmelites and their companions made their way to Saintes, where there was a great Abbey of Nôtre Dame, whose Abbess was of the ancient house of Foix, but whose convent was sadly in need of reform. She showed herself, however, exceedingly kind to the Carmelite nuns, and kept them hospitably entertained for two days. When they were about to start again, they were surprised to find that the Abbess' niece had seated herself in the nuns' carriage, and declared her intention of going with them to Paris to be received as a postulant in their convent. Mother Anne was much touched by this incident, as it showed how deeply the grace of St. Teresa's spirit had wrought in this girl of eighteen—already nominated coadjutor[1] to her aunt—that she should so early feel a thirst for religious perfection. But it was against St. Teresa's rule to admit novices who had been in other orders, and

[1] She would succeed as a matter of course to the government of the Abbey.

her prudent and gentle refusal wrought the desired end; for when the girl became Abbess of Nôtre Dame she thoroughly reformed the community; and when, later on, the Carmelites sent a colony to Saintes, she lodged them in the Abbey for two years, while their own convent was building.

From Saintes they journeyed to Poitiers, where they also made a halt of three days, and where there seem to have been two excellent communities, of Sainte Croix and the Trinity, who vied with each other in welcoming St. Teresa's nuns. They were lodged at the Trinity, and the Abbess insisted on their taking her own carriage as far as Paris. At Orleans, which was the next stage, the fine loyal old city distinguished itself by its welcome to the nuns. The principal inhabitants went in crowds to visit them and offer them every service, and their stay there was made a festival throughout the town.

Their travels and troubles now, indeed, were nearly ended. M. de Bérulle and M. Marillac came out from Paris as far as Longmineau to meet the carriages, and rode before them to the capital. They entered Paris by their own Faubourg St. Jacques, and thus came easily to the gates of Nôtre Dame des Champs, the walls of which, in spite of all the delays, were not considered dry enough for them to sleep there. They were to occupy, for the present,

the Small House,[2] or old Priory, which had been fully arranged by Madame Acarie for their reception, but as they were in the octave of St. Denis, it was thought well to visit at once the shrine of the apostle and martyr of Paris. The whole party, therefore, regardless of their fatigue, started again for 'the little village of St. Denis,' then entirely separate, and almost six miles from the capital.

As they were passing over the old bridge of Nôtre Dame, they saw two splendid equipages coming to meet them; the first containing the two foundresses of Nôtre Dame des Champs, Madame de Longueville and Madame d'Estouteville, the second our old friends, Madame Acarie and Madame de Bréauté. And with the carriages was M. de Bérulle, 'the little Dom Pedro,' quite point device, mounted upon a grand horse with splendid housings, and altogether in state, or, as Madame Jourdain says, 'exactly like some great prelate.' They could all only bow and wave their hands to one another upon the bridge, and the whole cavalcade turned and went on together to St. Denis.

But when they were there, and everybody alighted in front of the solemn old towers of the burial-place of the Kings of France, then, indeed, words poured plentifully forth from full hearts, and they all mingled

[2] 'Petit Logis.'

their voices in thanksgiving and marvel at the goodness of God. With what feelings Madame Acarie embraced the Spanish nuns after all her suspense and difficulties and wearisome delay, probably no words can ever describe. From herself very few words were heard at all; for, like our Lady, she kept all these things locked within the deep fountains of her heart, pouring them out abundantly only in prayer before the altar. After they had all visited the shrine where the relics of the Saints were exposed in great, costly reliquaries, engraved with the names of Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, Madame Acarie and her two girls, with the Princesses, and Madame de Bréauté, returned to Paris, leaving the tired nuns and their escort to rest at St. Denis for the night.

But while the nuns, and even Mother Anne of Jesus herself, with all her burthen of her new Motherhood, slept, Madame Acarie scarcely closed her eyes. Her heart was too widely awake, too full of the graces and blessings poured out upon her efforts to allow her to sleep, and it is probable also that she was rapt in one of those ecstatic trances which at times overcame her, for, the next morning, when the faithful Andrée went to her, she found her so exhausted, that she begged her not to speak a single word. For Madame Acarie would at all times keep silence as to the events that filled her mind

till Andrée made the well-known sign by which each had agreed to abide when the other had exceeded indiscretion.

Andrée's precaution was indeed most wise, for the coming day was one of extraordinary fatigue and emotion to her mistress. First, she and the same party went out again to St. Denis, and took the nuns to a little chapel on the heights above the village (Montmartre), which according to immemorial traditions was built on the very spot where the martyrs had sealed their teaching with their blood. There M. de Brétigny said Mass, at which the whole party received Communion, so that they must have left Paris fasting, and they all besought the protection of St. Denis for the Carmelite foundation in France. Separated from the chapel by a small vineyard was the Benedictine Abbey in which Madame Jourdain's daughter was now a school-girl, and soon afterwards a novice. She went into the convent, therefore, to see her, and, in fact, to take leave of her in this world, for she herself entered Nôtre Dame des Champs as a Carmelite a fortnight afterwards. The nuns, meanwhile, paid a visit to the Abbess, who deserves to be recorded as one of the noblest women of her time. Marie de Beauvilliers had been thoroughly determined that her abbey should not persist in the disgraceful state of worldliness

and dissipated relaxation which stigmatized so many of its contemporaries, and she obliged her nuns to keep their rule. Her efforts were rewarded by the open revolt and outbreak of women, who having fallen from a higher spiritual condition, had laid themselves open to the more grievous temptations. These poor, uncontrolled nuns twice threatened the life of Madame de Beauvilliers with poison, and once made an attempt to stab her. But none of these terrible outbursts caused the slightest failure of her courage and resolve; and in the end her noble example prevailed over the perverse wills of her nuns, and the community was, when Mother Anne and her companions visited it, a notable instance of regular discipline and devout life.

This coming of St. Teresa's daughters was like a crowning reward to Madame de Beauvilliers. She overwhelmed them with tender, reverent attentions, and received them gladly into the refectory at the community dinner. Madame Jourdain's daughter was sent for, and her mother then told her that she was already dead to the world and that her future life would be hidden with Christ. The next day the Princesses arrived again at St. Denis to conduct the nuns to their new convent, or rather to their temporary home in the Small House. Their chapel, however, upon the same spot as that in

which those who love their noble order may still kneel and indulge their devotion,[3] was ready for use, and Mother Anne of Jesus led the way over its threshold, intoning the spirit-stirring Psalm enjoined by St. Teresa: 'Laudate Dominum omnes gentes: laudate eum, omnes populi.' Her companions took up the glad strain, which to them must have sounded so peculiarly appropriate: 'Quoniam confirmata est super nos misericordia ejus: et veritas Domini manet in æternum.' Though, as old Hervé says, 'in their voices there was more of tears than of song.'

The only drawback was that M. de Bérulle had fallen ill—which was no wonder—of a low, nervous fever, which prostrated him for six months; and although Mother Anne of St. Bartholomew, went off joyously from the choir to the kitchen, in her office as lay-sister, to cook the dinner, and gladness flooded the hearts of the nuns, there were plenty of sharp, substantial crosses at hand upon which the French foundation could be solidly built. One of these was that a deep and mysterious sadness darkened Madame Acarie's soul, just when she, above all those present, should have been joining in the *Laudate* with exulting joy. She afterwards told Madame de Bréauté that

[3] The very same walls were standing till the Great Revolution, when they were razed to the ground.

it was made known to her in that hour by our Lord that these Carmelite nuns whom her friends had gone so far to seek at such sacrifices of strength, pains, time, prayer, and cost, these nuns whom every one, even the shouting crowd that filled up all the ways of access to the convent, was welcoming, would not remain there to finish their work, but would leave it still unformed on her hands. Well is it, indeed, for us that the coming clouds are hidden, in general, from our eyes; for there are few minds and fewer hearts strong enough to be able to bear the vision of blighted fruit in the springing seed. But Barbara Acarie was pre-eminently one of the strong, and it had often been her lot to share that most mysterious grief of her Lord: 'My soul is sorrowful, even unto death.'[4]

There were actual difficulties, too, pressing on them, as well as the griefs in store; for the Bishop, Cardinal de Gondy, was not pleased that the stranger nuns were not to be placed under his own immediate jurisdiction, and he refused to bless the house, so that, although it was Sunday, Mother Anne would not allow the nuns to be seen, nor was the Office chanted in public in the choir. M. Gallemant could not bear this state of things, and he flew to the Bishop's house at Nôtre Dame, the

[4] St. Mark xiv. 34; St. Matt. xxvi. 38.

picturesque old dwelling-place of the Bishops of Paris, whose destruction was a loss to Europe, and kneeling at the Cardinal's feet, he besought him to reconsider his severe decree. The Cardinal then made his plaint about the nuns having been exempted from his authority, to which M. Gallemant meekly replied: 'But, Monseigneur, they are most certainly under your authority, for they are governed by priests who are entirely submissive to you.' This answer, and M. Gallemant's perfect lowliness, soothed the Cardinal's jealousy, and he promised to send his Vicar General on the morrow to install the nuns publicly in their convent.

He was as good as his word. The Vicar General said Mass at Nôtre Dame des Champs, solemnly placed the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, and blessed the community and house in the Bishop's stead, after which the name of the 'Incarnation' was given to it, in remembrance of St. Luke, the Apostle of the Great Mystery, whose feast it was, and of the cradle-convent in Spain, where St. Teresa originated the Discalced Reform. This was done at the instance of M. de Bérulle. Three days afterwards, the Queen, Mary de' Medici, paid a visit to the house in great pomp, and after going over it, and talking to the nuns, she asked to see M. de Brétigny, and thanked him courteously, in the

King's name, for the rich gift he had brought to France. That lowly retiring priest replied that he of himself should never have succeeded in the undertaking, and that the one to be thanked was M. de Bérulle. He himself, he gently added, could have been nothing but a hindrance to the work. The Queen, after bestowing costly gifts upon the convent, went away touched and softened, and probably was able to sympathize thenceforth with many of her Court who afterwards sought peace and refreshment for their world-weary souls at Nôtre Dame des Champs.

CHAPTER II.

The First Grafts.

Now that the stock was firmly planted in the ground, the work of grafting was vigorously begun, and the three recognized Superiors, M. de Bérulle, M. du Val, and M. Gallemant, brought forward the novices who had been so long preparing for this happy day. As Mother Anne of Jesus did not speak French, the whole sifting labour of choice and decision virtually devolved upon Madame Acarie, to whom the three priests always deferred with that genuine greatness

which never asserts desire for dominion. Continually reiterating M. du Val's words, that her gift of discernment of the state of the soul was most eminent, and knowing her thorough devotion to St. Geneviève's house, they sought her advice as to each postulant as she was brought forward, and it was decided, in the first place, to receive only three ladies of the congregation, Madame Jourdain, Mdlle. d'Hannivel, from Rouen, and the faithful servant Andrée Levoix, whose Christian virtues and constancy richly deserved that she should be one of the earliest chosen for the new foundation. On the feast of All Saints, a fresh stream of noble and lordly visitors poured along the tall narrow streets to the Small House of Nôtre Dame des Champs, and at the entrance the Duchess de Longueville gave her hand to Mdlle. d'Hannivel, the Princess d'Estouteville to Madame Jourdain, while Madame Acarie led in her own faithful servant, preferred before her to the spiritual espousals. Preferred also in another way, for as Mother Anne of Jesus met them at the inner gate, she passed by the two ladies with their high born sponsors, and holding out her hand to Andrée, who had modestly retired to the background, led her the first of all into the choir. The other postulants, already full of that just lowliness which grasps realities instead of

shadows, immediately discerned the fitness of this choice and, possibly, also wishing to show their sense of Madame Acarie's training, besought Mother Anne to give the first habit to Andrée. She consented, and the maid-servant, as the type of the 'Handmaid of the Lord,' was thus planted as the fitting offshoot of the French Carmelites. The Catalan Provincial gave the habit to Andrée as his last act before returning to Spain, and M. Gallemant preached the sermon. He took as his text the obviously suitable words from the Third Book of Kings: 'And Elias departing from thence, found Eliseus, the son of Saphat, ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen: and he was one of them that were ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen: and when Elias came up to him, he cast his mantle upon him.'[1] Thence diverging to the Spirit of God communicated by the prophet's mantle, he spoke at some length of the great holiness and vigour of St. Teresa's reform, and of what would be looked for from those who entered the Carmelite Order.

In less than a fortnight from this first clothing, the postulant who had in reality been the first chosen for the veil, Mdlle. Fonteines Marans, was able to leave her father, and entered the Convent as Sister Madeleine of St. Joseph. On the Presenta-

[1] 3 Kings xix. 19.

tion, Madame du Coudray followed her, and on the Immaculate Conception, the 8th of December, Madame de Bréauté, as Mary of Jesus. Thus, at last, Madame Acarie's 'charming Marchioness' had freed herself from all her bewildering trammels of dress, sparkling society, and brilliant converse with the distinguished wits of the time, to take the rough habit and alpargatas[2] of St. Teresa. The usual course of noviceships was singularly departed from in some points at Nôtre Dame des Champs. Mother Anne of Jesus, the Novice Mistress, could not speak French, while the novices did not know a word of Spanish, so that their inner thoughts, wishes, and more intimate difficulties either had to go unexpressed, or to be told to Madame Acarie, whom the Duchess de Longueville, as foundress, could always take with her into the inclosure. Happily, Madame Acarie was, as we know, well fitted and well used to hearing the revelations of many kinds of souls, and she co-operated in every way with Mother Anne, making herself merely her ears and mouthpiece. It would have been hard upon these young beginners, fresh from the world without, if they could not have laid their difficulties before some spiritual mother, for, in spite of all the care taken to fit up the Small House suitably, it turned out to be most

[2] The sandals worn by the Carmelite nuns.

unsuitable to even the smallest inclosed community. Instead of having each her cell, the novices slept in one large room, clumsily partitioned by coarse frieze blankets into some sort of cubicles. There were no sheets on the pallet beds, only a straw mattress and one coverlet. To the Spanish nuns life must have been one long penance, for instead of the dry warmth of their own sunny Spain, there was their first experience of the raw, marrow-piercing cold of one of the coldest suburbs of Paris. The novices suffered from the food, which was prepared and seasoned entirely in the Spanish way, and was certainly 'much fitter to deprive them of all appetite than to stimulate it,' as their chronicler says. Of these coarse, and probably garlic-flavoured messes they were expected to eat whatever portions were set before them, and if Mother Anne took the benefit of Madame Acarie's ears in her struggles with a foreign language, she certainly made full use of her own most practised and discerning eyes. If any of these delicately-nurtured women put aside any portion of their mess, or left any of it on their plates, Mother Anne would stigmatize them as 'pickers and choosers,'[3] and would say to one of the nuns, 'Hold, this is a girl who will make a thousand difficulties; she is not fit for our work!'

[3] *Epluchuteuses* is the delightful but untranslateable word.

It became so deeply rooted in Mdlle. d'Hannivel's mind, that this matter of eating whatever was given was one chief mark by which to judge a Carmelite vocation, that when long afterwards she became a noted Superior in the order, she never allowed any indulgence upon this point, saying in the frank, outspoken way which seems also proper to the order, 'If an angel were to offer himself, I would not admit him to the profession if he did not eat just what the others did. Those who are delicate about food are never really healthy.' Once, on a high festival, a memorable occasion for the poor French novices, Sister Anne of St. Bartholomew was bent upon outdoing herself in her cooking exploits, and sent up a dish of heavily-spiced cod fish and prunes, which was the delight of the Spaniards, but very sickening to the poor novices, who were wholly unused to such strange anomalies in food. Mother Anne, whose eyes, as usual, were wide open, said to them afterwards very drily, 'We are obliged to eat what suits you every day, my Sisters; cannot you accommodate yourselves to our tastes just for once?'

A few words must be said about Mdlle. de Fonteines, whom M. de Bérulle and Madame Acarie had carefully cultivated, justly regarding her as a chosen corner-stone of the French foundation. There

seems to be a real coincidence in the fact that in this first convent, dedicated to the Mystery of the Incarnation, the noviceship should begin with the lowly Andrée Levoix, and that Mdlle. de Fonteines should be called after her. There was first, we may say, the coming of the lowly, homely shepherds, and afterwards the richer homage of the noble and princely sages. When M. de Fonteines had with reluctance given his consent to his daughter's entrance, he was buoyed up by the hope that when once her fragile miserable state of health was discovered, the nuns would refuse to receive her as a novice. But when he learned that she had been welcomed with overwhelming joy, he was so disappointed and saddened at her loss, that he took to his bed, and was so seriously ill, that her reception was deferred for some days. Being, however, worthy of such a daughter, M. de Fonteines rallied, and resolved to give his hearty consent if she were still determined to go. His generous goodness, and the tears and sobs of her little sisters, who hung about her, pierced Mdlle. de Fonteines to the heart. Never yet had she been able to conceive such bitterness of anguish as when she pictured her father drooping and ill, deserted in his old age, while her sisters needed her care. Still, she was convinced that the attraction she had felt to the Carmelite Order was no delusion.

She had been called by God, and she must leave even her dead to bury their dead. Her father and aunt, Madame de Sillery, then insisted on going with her to the convent, and even then the natural pangs of parting were so intense, that she felt 'as if the carriage were the tumbril cart, in which condemned criminals are taken to execution.' This brave girl of six-and-twenty was, however, so resolved, that she even asked and obtained leave not to enter with the usual festive dress, but to be received in her every-day stuff gown. She became a most fervent novice, and her fervour and utter self-sacrifice won such extraordinary graces, that they overflowed in fulness upon her father and her home. M. de Fonteines regained health and energy, and instead of losing his daughter, he felt her presence with a sense of continual joy.

Madame de Bréauté also had the Red Sea to cross before she could win her rest. Her father and mother idolized her, and she was in truth the joy, the charm, and the sunshine of their life. M. de Sancy, her father, was the first to hear her wishes and to consent, and he undertook to tell his wife. She was completely overcome by the blow, and besought her daughter to go at once, that the blow of the executioner's axe might the sooner be over. Accordingly, about four o'clock in the morning, that

the time might be hastened and the anguish of the farewells avoided, the heavy carriages were lumbering up the narrow streets, and Madame de Bréauté, with her weeping father and mother, got out at the convent gates. Already, early as it was, her own married sister and aunt, with Madame de Ste. Beuve, Madame de Longueville, Madame Acarie, and M. Marillac, were standing there in the bitter cold of the December morning. And there too was the ever-constant M. de Bérulle, while Mother Anne and her nuns were ranged at the convent entrance, tall, motionless, veiled figures, shrouded in their long white cloaks, and holding great crucifixes in their hands.

Madame de Bréauté knelt to ask for her father's blessing, and then the thought that they should see that beautiful, sportive, charming creature no more, so moved all the spectators, that they, as well as M. de Sancy, shed heartfelt tears. The brave old officer veiled his eyes with his hat, but his shaking voice could not be heard giving his blessing. The scene became too painful to be borne, and Madame de Bréauté sprang up from her knees, and fled through the inner door which was opened for her. Some one put a crucifix into her hand, and as she received the habit, and then prostrated in the choir, wetting the crucifix with her tears, the

sweetest and most transporting peace stole upon her with the thought that never again should she be clothed except with the livery of Christ.

In the church M. and Madame de Sancy still knelt, also shedding many tears, but it is impossible not to believe that their heroic sacrifice of their daughter was royally rewarded. The Duke de Montpensier arrived just in time to find the clothing over, and to learn that the bright, frolicsome, witty Charlotte de Sancy had vanished from the world for ever, under the name of Sister Mary of Jesus.

The new novices were soon completely grafted into St. Teresa's stock, and rejoiced Mother Anne's heart by their thorough union and generosity of spirit, which was shown in the frank gaiety of a single heart, which is so widely different from the effervescence of levity. Anything like gloom, disguise, or reserve of heart was at once detected and cast out at Notre Dame des Champs. The novices composed hymns and pious songs, and at recreation represented or recited some of the Sacred Mysteries or the events in our Lord's life, and the lives of the Saints. This obliged them to study and make the events they would afterwards narrate or personify entirely their own. The union of spirit and heart among them was so thorough in its charity that there was henceforth no more talk of Spain or France

as separate nations, and even the two languages began to mingle. The novices learned Spanish enough to make themselves understood, and for fuller intercourse Mother Anne now allowed them to confer with Mdlle. de Fonteines, thus making her, while still a novice, a kind of novice-mistress for the rest. This one fact alone would manifest the wise largeness and spiritual nobility of the Carmelite Mother.

M. de Bérulle was from the first the confessor both of the professed nuns and the novices,[1] and whereas he found that the former had been accustomed to receive Communion twice a week, on Sundays and Thursdays, which at that time was frequent, he added a Saturday's Communion, to beg the special protection of our Lady for the community and its Superiors. Both as confessor and Superior he often expressed his admiration at the discernment and greatness of soul with which Mother Anne pruned and cherished her nursery of burgeoning shoots from St. Teresa's stock, as well as at the hardihood with which these tender plants bore the sharp discipline of their new life.

It is indeed impossible not to be filled with wonder how these delicately-nurtured Frenchwomen, so far more refined and fastidious of habits than the noblest-

[1] The two elder Superiors were prevented, M. Gallemant by his cure at Aumale, and M. du Val by increasing deafness.

born Spaniard, could endure such a life even for a few months. There were neither chairs nor tables in the convent, except the rough deal table on which they dined, and there were no seats or reading-desks in their chapel. When at recreation they sat on the floor, and at the repeated admonishing, '*Parler et ouvrer peut-on?*' in the rude French of the Spanish nuns, they assiduously twirled their distaffs or carded their wool in unquestioning obedience. In the chapel, kneeling upright on the floor, without the slightest relief, their slender hands were weighted with the clumsy Office books, out of which they intoned the Psalms, in what to their ears must have sounded one dreary monotonous wail, as fatiguing to the ear as to the voice. In the refectory there was the perpetual cabbage or cabbage-soup, the strangely-seasoned fish, the garlic, and coarsely-flavoured Spanish dishes, which to their palates must have seemed meet food for pigs. They had not even the one respite of peace and solitude in their cells, and when their hour of sleep at last struck they were forced to troop into the blanket-partitioned dormitory, in which one restless or snoring Sister could keep the rest awake for the night. Yet even these accumulated privations were not enough for the fire of their zeal, and day after day these brave-hearted women were seeking out and begging for fresh

austerities, which never wrought otherwise than to add to the bright fresh gaiety of their hearts, and the serene peace of the faces which 'seemed to shine as from a lucent lamp within.'

Such were the willing martyrs of penance and reparation for the sins of France in the early part of the seventeenth century, and thus, while the court, the clergy, and many of the conventual houses cried aloud to Heaven for chastisement, this was one under-current, among others, which was slowly gathering to itself the pure springs of faith and undying love, to pour them in fresh streams of blessing through the sinning but nobly-gifted French people.

CHAPTER III.

The Spanish Prioress.

BEFORE continuing to trace the course of that expanding current we must linger a little over the great severe character of the woman who for the present was guiding its course. Anne, the daughter of Diego de Lobera[1] and Francia de Torres, was born at Medina, in the kingdom of Leon, in 1545. She had one brother, Christopher, who entered the

[1] Boucher gives his name as 'Jacques,'

Society of the Jesuits. She herself was deaf and dumb till she was seven years old, when, after a pilgrimage made by her mother to Nôtre Dame du Port, the church which had been built by the family, she gained the use of hearing and speech. When her brother decided to enter the Jesuit noviceship, and bade her good-bye, Anne was only ten years old. She was grievously afflicted, but went off to the church to comfort herself with prayer, and when she came back looked quite happy and bright. She said to her grandmother, 'I am not going to cry about Don Christopher any more. I am delighted that he has offered himself to God, and I am going to do the same.' In explanation she repeated that she had made a vow never to marry. Her grandmother was exceedingly vexed at this step, but was consoled on hearing that a vow on such an important point taken by a mere child could easily be annulled; but Anne boldly rejected all such measures. 'I shall find out a way of making it good,' she said—this child of ten years—'for I shall renew it every day till I am free to dispose of myself altogether!' And she held to her word.

Not, however, without the knowledge of what the happiness of a loving married life can be—for when she was fifteen Anne was so beautiful that, according to Spanish custom, she was already asked of her

relations many times in marriage. Whenever a fresh demand of this sort was made she would wash in cold water and go out immediately into the blazing sun, that her face might become reddened, and her beautiful complexion spoilt. Yet still her grandmother pressed her earnestly to marry, till, to escape from what seemed really to be in store for her, Anne obtained leave to go to stay with an uncle, and there the final temptation was met and overcome. Her uncle had several sons, and for one of them Anne found that she could feel the real affection of a wife. Yet there was her vow always disturbing her heart and reproaching her conscience, and that vow, she resolved afresh, should be kept. The death of one of her companions, a very pretty girl, to whom she had been much attached, affected Anne very deeply, and caused her many reflections upon the transient happiness the brightest life can give. She made up her mind to cast off the outer world entirely, went to her own room and cut off all her beautiful hair, put on a dark heavy serge gown, which was called the 'habit of the consecrated,'[2] and a linen band round her cropped head, and in this condition went down to the reception-room, where a number of her relations were gathered to keep the festivity of St. Nicholas Day. They were all scared and

[2] L'habit de béate.

displeased at the unexpected sight, but they were all Spaniards, and with true Spanish faith they recognized at once that the vow must be kept, and the call of God obeyed. During the same year Teresa de Ahumada renewed her fervour, and great spiritual things were preparing for Spain.

The Order of the Jesuits had been founded about twenty years, and about this time Anne became acquainted with Father Rodriguez, under whose guidance she put herself, with such profit that at Placenza she was called the 'Queen of girls.' In 1570 Father Rodriguez first saw St. Teresa at Toledo, and he told Anne some particulars of her life and work. At her request he then told St. Teresa what he knew of Anne's life and character, and asked her if she would accept her as a postulant. St. Teresa immediately wrote her a letter beginning with these words: 'You are most welcome. I shall not look upon you as my novice, but as my companion in the work of God.' St. Teresa also left Anne free to choose between the six convents already founded in the strict observance, though she herself hoped her choice would fall upon her 'eldest born,' Avila. It so turned out, and there Anne received the Carmelite habit in 1570, taking to her name the addition 'of Jesus,' at St. Teresa's special wish. She had also, at her own desire, been allowed to enter as a simple

novice, and to be in the same state of obedience as the rest. Anne had also been bidden to go without any dowry, and to take only a little linen for the use of the infirmary. The letters making the arrangements on Anne's part were written for her, for she could not write a word herself. When the horses were at the gates to start, Anne was still invisible in her room, and when at length the servants went to look for her they found her absorbed in prayer, while the whole room was full of supernatural light. She had to travel five days and nights, and was joined on the road by a poor man, who after a while vanished, but appeared again in Avila to point out the way to St. Joseph's Convent.[3] The habit was given at once to Anne, and she asked to be allowed to see the hermitage[4] in which the nuns from time to time retired into perfect solitude. On going into one in which St. Teresa had had the scourging at the pillar represented, Anne recognized in the face of the Christ the poor man who had joined her on the road.

When St. Teresa came back to Avila she welcomed her illustrious novice with delight, and made her share her cell and enter into all her plans as her

[3] The first time that any church had been built under the invocation of St. Joseph.

[4] Small separated rooms used for retreats.

companion and equal. She found her (at nearly five-and-twenty) tall and finely-formed, with large eyes and rather a large mouth, and with cheerful, though grave, countenance and manners. Her one difficulty in the convent was her constant hunger; and Sister Anne of St. Bartholomew, who may be called the 'Angel of the Kitchen,' used to slip several extra crusts under her napkin to appease the cravings of the young healthy appetite that never found the two Carmelite meals a day sufficient.[5]

In three months' time Anne was taken by St. Teresa to the new foundation at Salamanca, where she acted as Novice-Mistress. Her novices soon became renowned for their courage and solidity in spiritual progress; and when asked what course she followed, Anne answered that she always tried to find out how they were led by God, and then to let them follow His guidance, and that above all things she never tried to guide them all alike. She made very light of the accidents of birth or fortune, but wished her novices to have 'a fund of common sense, some education, and good health.' She required them to practise great charity towards one another, largeness and freedom of heart, and punctual faithfulness in their spiritual duties. For, she always

[5] The two meals—dinner at ten or eleven, according to the fast, or no fast; and supper at six.

said, 'to do things before or after the proper time, is only offering to God either sour grapes or dried-up raisins.'

During the virulent and extraordinary persecution which the Calced Carmelite Fathers stirred up against the Discalced, and especially against St. John of the Cross, Anne of Jesus bore the full brunt of their displeasure. St. Teresa had been silenced by obedience, but Anne so bravely filled her place that even the opposing Provincial called her 'the captain of all the Prioresses after Teresa of Ahumada.' St. Teresa then said, 'Anne does the work and I have the fame. I laid the foundations, but she has built and held up the building.' She wrote to her after her terse, outspoken way, in these remarkable terms: 'My daughter and my crown, I can never be tired of thanking God for having brought your Reverence into our holy religion (religious Order). You are the pillar of it.' And not satisfied with her own very strong words, St. Teresa asked the Provincial Chapter to thank Anne for the benefits she had conferred upon the Order.

At her profession Anne was rapt into an ecstasy, and thereafter St. Teresa ordered that the vows should always be made privately in Chapter, and that the professed habit only should be given in public. The wording of her profession is curious in the old French

translation: 'Anne de Jésus fay profession et promets obeissance, chasteté, et pauvreté, à Dieu notre Seigneur, et à la Bienheureuse Vierge nostre Dame de Mont Carmel: et au reverendissime Père Jean Baptiste Rubeo Prieure Général, &c., &c., selon la régle primitive lu dit Ordre qui est sans mistigation jusques à la mort. Anne de Jesus.'

Anne was dangerously ill, and not able to go to her, when St. Teresa died; but the Saint appeared to her, and she was immediately cured. Henceforth this grand woman was to be known as 'the Eliseus of the Reformed Carmelites.' Philip II. was so impressed by the multitude of miracles worked at St. Teresa's tomb, that he signified his wish to have a Carmelite convent in Madrid. Anne of Jesus was therefore sent there, and made such an impression upon the Empress and the Infanta Isabella that their friendship was of great service to her during that persecution of the Calced Fathers, under which her holy confessor, St. John of the Cross, finally sank. A few years before she left Spain for France, Anne had the satisfaction of being called upon to lay the body of St. Teresa in a magnificent shrine, which the Duchess of Alva had had made for the purpose.

Still, there is no denying, even if there were cause for doing so, that, like other women of a grand masculine type, Mother Anne of Jesus was subject to certain

faults, which showed unpleasantly when no longer dealing with the hardier and more primitively brought up novices of her own land. There was a great obstacle, no doubt, in her imperfect knowledge of the language of her new children; but she was also prejudiced against the French character, and exaggerated mere natural traits into defects of the soul. She was apt to call their delicacy of constitution sensuality, and their childlike gaiety, dissipation. Once, during the Office, when she was pronouncing the Latin words broadly, in the Spanish way, she heard the sounds of stifled laughter, which the poor novices could not control; and not content with making them acknowledge their fault in Chapter, she went so far as to deprive them of their Communion. Happily, there was a Superior at hand to overrule the decision; and when the mighty matter was laid before M. de Bérulle, he released the poor novices from their hard sentence. If this had been the only instance of Mother Anne's rigid spirit, there would not have been much cause to complain; but unfortunately she began to show it more and more, and her austere face and cold manner hindered more than one of the novices from going to her with a child's trust in a mother. She had been accustomed also to the lofty and marvellous course of events which signalized the beginning of the 'reform,' when,

as with most religious foundations or renewals, abundant supernatural favours had been poured out upon St. Teresa and her first children. Mother Anne probably had a tendency to exalt this, the marvellous aspect of religious life, beyond the ordinary and surer path of faithfulness to the rules and common duties. For instance, the first Discalced Nuns in Spain had been accustomed to spend great part of the day before the Blessed Sacrament, and to take their distaffs with them and spin in choir. It must have been a strange and touching sight, to see these fervent, devoted women spinning while absorbed in mental prayer, and sometimes, when rapt in contemplation, breaking out into audible speech with our Lord in the Tabernacle, praising Him or renewing their devotion to Him by glowing acts of love. There was something grand even in the unusualness and want of formality of this union of prayer and work; but to M. de Bérulle's wise judgment it seemed to savour of exaggeration and a certain want of true reverence, and he forbade it altogether. He carefully distinguished between the unusual, miraculous, or rather marvellous course of a fresh religious foundation, which passes away, and the ordinary supernatural life, which must always be vigorously maintained in a religious order; and he desired that this vitality of vigour should not be burned up or dissipated by

what might become unwholesome or morbid enthusiasm. His direction was admirable in its practical wisdom, but he and Mother Anne were unfortunately often at issue; for, says Madame Jourdain,[6] 'so vast a soul could not feel at ease in narrow bounds, and thus does God make use even of our own gifts to try us.'

Probably M. de Bérulle—whose character, as we well know, had a foundation of strength of will and inflexible determination not often seen—was as great a trial to poor Mother Anne, as her reserve, and the difficulty of making her happy in Paris, was to him. It is certain that he resolved to wage an exterminating war with her love of early habits, her cravings for the Carmelite Superiors, even those with whom she had been at issue, and with her passionate, deep-rooted love of Spain. There is an incident, trivial in itself, but preserved by the Discalced Carmelite Fathers, as if they attached some weight to it, of a little statuette of the Infant Jesus which Mother Anne always kept in her cell, and which she cherished partly from having brought it with her from Spain. M. de Bérulle told her one day to give him this statuette through the turn; and after he had kept it awhile, he begged her to make a present of it to an old French priest who sometimes took his place

[6] Sister Louise of Jesus.

as confessor to the nuns. It may seem to us a hard measure to deprive the poor Prioress of her last Spanish memorial; but there can be no doubt that if she held to it obstinately, the attachment was not consistent with the spiritual progress and lofty aspirations for which M. de Bérulle was entitled to look.

CHAPTER IV.

'Mademoiselle' Acarie a Novice.

WHILE we have been following the course of events at Nôtre Dame des Champs, pursuing the course of Madame Acarie's work, she herself may seem to have been put aside, but she was, during all these first months of the foundation, actively engaged, though in her own special, hidden way. She went in and out of the convent with Madame de Longueville, fulfilling her duty as Pro-Novice Mistress, and using every moment of the time for the good of these fervent souls. Much of her strain of advice, and many of her sayings, which have been carefully preserved, are full of wisdom for all conditions of souls. She confined herself generally to the solid virtues of Christian life, and dwelt continually upon the need of practising humility and self-abnegation, if any

solidity of religious progress were to be looked for. She always carried the *Spiritual Combat* in her hand, and was fond of reading some of the excellent maxims of the first chapters to the novices. 'Trust in God, distrust of self,' was her constant watch-word, and she urged the novices to practise both unremittingly before pressing on to fresh branches of spiritual life. She specially sought to ground these beginners in the deep sense of God's Presence and infinite greatness, repeating that God has no need of our good actions, for they add nothing at all to His greatness; we have only to be faithful to Him, and serve Him with all our hearts. Once, when adverting to the 'voice of One crying in the desert,' she said to one of the novices: 'Our faults and imperfections are the voice that cry out in the desert of our souls, and say, "Look at thy spiritual misery; learn to know thyself."' The novice answered that she had a great wish to please God; but as Madame Acarie did not think this answer showed sufficient humility, she said, 'We must wish rather not to displease God, for what are we that we should aspire to please Him or to say anything agreeable to Him? 'If we aim humbly at not displeasing Him, we walk in a safe path.'

Sometimes Madame Acarie was rapt into a kind of ecstatic joy while thus discoursing with the novices;

and once when reading out of the *Spiritual Combat,* that souls while still on earth can taste the blessedness of Heaven, she exclaimed: 'Ah! my Sisters, it is true indeed that the soul that humbles itself, and seeks God in solitude and silence, tastes the joys of Heaven! The soul may seem forsaken, but it already shares the joys of the blessed life. Yet so long as we are bound by our passions, we cannot discern this happiness as it is.'

Madame Acarie was much troubled, about this time, by the way in which her name was joined with the establishment of Notre Dame des Champs. People crowded to see her, ran after her in the streets, and spoke of her to one another as a saint. A lady sent one day to M. du Val and asked if all the wonderful things said of Madame Acarie were true? The prudent doctor replied in the Irish fashion, by another question: 'What wonderful things do they say about her?' 'Why it is said,' answered the lady, 'that she has revelations directly from God; that her whole life is marvellous (superhuman); that her spiritual knowledge is astonishing; that her house is full of people who consult her in regard to their souls; and that many eminent ecclesiastics seek her advice upon the most important matters.' M. du Val listened to all that she said, making only some slight answer; but after she had gone he said to one of

his friends: 'All that she said was true, but it was not the half of what could have been said on the subject.'

The King himself took the utmost interest in Madame Acarie's welfare, and when evil things were said of her, he sent her a message of sympathy, begging her not to mind the wagging of evil tongues. Mother Anne had a great wish to hear from Madame Acarie herself the whole story of the difficulties of their foundation, but she never succeeded in eliciting anything but by chance and a few words. 'My part in the matter, Mother, was only the faults and mistakes,' she said, 'and I beg of God always to forgive them.'

When Cardinal de Gondy came to see the convent, he wished Madame Acarie to go through it with him and give him the whole story of the foundation, but she merely answered his questions, and as soon as she could do it without discourtesy, she slipped away.

In the same spirit of looking upon herself merely as a stop-gap and substitute, and as something to be put aside and left out when the temporary work was done, Madame Acarie withdrew, as soon as she could, from her important and most valuable work as Pro-Novice Mistress at the convent. While she was still giving the most solid instruction to the novices, a

priest of some eminence found fault with her for doing so, and told her that 'she was spoiling the whole thing.' She did not make him any answer, but afterwards said, 'He is right. I ought not to be doing this work, for I am good for nothing myself.' M. Gallemant himself once disapproved of some piece of advice she had given, when she said: 'Why is this work given me to do? Every one ought to be aware that I never know how to do anything well.' Madame Acarie continued, however, to watch over all the temporalities of the convent, and to do a great deal of necessary external business for the nuns. She started a factory in Champagne for making the light serges worn by the Carmelites, but though she spent a great deal of time and pains upon the manufacture, it was not at that time equal to the thin woollen material brought from Spain.

The first blow of death fell upon Nôtre Dame des Champs in 1605, when in the Lent of that year the faithful Andrée de Tous les Saints was chosen as the first fruits to be garnered in Heaven. She was attacked with a malignant fever, and as it had been intended to send out a fresh swarm under her guidance, very earnest prayers were offered for her recovery. She died, however, on Good Friday, and was buried in the church, with an inscription recording that she was the first professed nun of the French

Reformed Carmelite Order.[1] Madame Acarie moved forward, as the body was carried through the outer courtyard of the convent, and kissed the feet; after which she fell into an ecstasy which lasted throughout the time of the burial. On Easter Sunday, as Madame Acarie was going to Matins at St. Gervais, the soul of Andrée appeared to her, thanked her for all that she had done for her, and assured her that she was in Heaven. This Easter-gift was a great refreshment and comfort to her dear Mistress, and she told the novices at Nôtre Dame des Champs of it, that they might share her consolation and feel cheered on the way.

That same year the first of Madame Acarie's daughters entered the Convent of the Incarnation. This was her second girl, Margaret, who had always been the most remarkable of the three. She was not sixteen when she entered the novitiate as Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, but she soon set an example to the whole community. She was allowed to make her vows privately before the usual time, and thenceforth her life was one fervent course of the loftiest Christian virtue. Even Madame Acarie's most devoted friends record that Margaret surpassed her mother in holy living, and it is evident that her mind and character showed qualities of the

[1] She made her vows to Mother Anne of Jesus on her death-bed.

noblest order. She was very early put in command, after which her rule was more gentle than the nuns had given her credit for. After filling the office of Prioress several times, Mother Margaret died at the convent in the Rue Chapon, in Paris, at the age of seventy, and her heart was embalmed and taken to Pontoise.

Geneviève, the youngest of the three girls, was the next to determine her vocation. She had spent a good deal of her childhood in the neighbourhood of Clairvaux, and had thence imbibed so great a devotion to St. Bernard that she thought of being a 'Feuillantine.'[2] Finding, however, that the Feuillantine nuns worked and sat a good deal in community, though in silence, while the Carmelites worked alone in their cells, Geneviève made up her mind to follow Margaret to Nôtre Dame des Champs. This was a great joy to her mother, who never once swerved from her devoted affection to the chosen spot of her soul. Geneviève, as Mother Geneviève of St. Bernard, became eventually Prioress at Sens, where according to her own foreseeing conviction, she died in 1644.

As it so often happens in the reversing changes of nature and grace, Marie Acarie, the eldest-born, was the last to give up her freedom and that outer world in which she had taken such great delight.

[2] A Congregation of women under a form of Cistercian rule.

She inherited, probably, a good deal of her father's bright, joyous, versatile character, and it was exceedingly difficult to her to make up her mind to be tied to any stringent obligations in life. It seems to us now a little hard that the two inexorable alternatives, marriage or the convent, should have been perpetually used to drive her into a corner; but as society was then constituted, full of real, urgent, and terrible dangers, it may possibly have been the best course—sometimes the only course—that was open to Christian parents. Marie's marriage was at one time almost settled, and even the amount of her dowry was arranged, but she had no sort of leaning to married life, and shrank from its responsibilities even with repugnance. Yet at the same time she dreaded committing herself to the authorities of a conventual order, and remained vibrating, as her old chronicler says, 'between earth and Heaven, not able to touch either and find her rest.' M. Gallemant assured her perplexed father and mother that it would all end well and that Marie would certainly follow her sisters by and bye; but it was only after making a pilgrimage with her mother to Nôtre Dame de Liesse, that she received her final gift of heroic courage. Six months afterwards she too was found knocking at the broad-leafed gates of Nôtre Dame des Champs, and in a year's time she took her vows

there with her Sister Geneviève. She became Prioress at Orleans, after a foundation of four-and-twenty years, and was the first of that community who died.[3]

CHAPTER V.

First Swarms. Pontoise.

WE must now go back for awhile, to the regular current of events and the year 1605, when the first swarm left Nôtre Dame des Champs. Novices, as we have seen, had come pouring in, emulating each other in their fervent thirst for self-denial and holy austerity of life; and as St. Teresa discouraged large communities, the Superiors of the French Carmelites were anxious to follow her traditional spirit in the smallest details, and not to yield to the weakness, so often seen in first foundations, of clinging together, and making exceptions from the future course. Mother Anne was also very anxious to found a house under St. Joseph's patronage, which had first been invoked in Spain, and as M. du Val had a house at Pontoise, he offered it to the Order, that his native town might be the one honoured by the first

[3] The Orleans people had on this account a common proverb, saying, that 'St. Teresa's daughters were all immortal.'

new convent. Nearly everybody but M. du Val objected that Pontoise was a poor, miserable place, out of reach of the ordinary confessors of the community, and inconvenient for such instructions or spiritual conferences as are usually given to nuns. Madame Acarie, however, inclined much towards Pontoise, where the indefatigable M. Gallemant had established also one of his Congregations of girls on the plan of Ste. Geneviève. Madame Acarie's affection for Pontoise was indeed grounded upon the fact that it was full of simple, unspoiled, pious people. Madame de Bréauté had offered ten thousand crowns towards the convent, and Madame Acarie was despatched to Pontoise to look at M. du Val's house and see what the girls of the Congregation were like. Her report was so favourable that M. Marillac, with his usual devotedness, left Paris and settled himself at Pontoise during the time that the necessary alterations and additions to the house were being made. Any one who can reproduce in his mind the state of a small provincial town in France at that time, the condition of the roads, with the surrounding 'campagne' and its inhabitants, must acknowledge that this was no small sacrifice to a statesman high in the favour of the Court.

The universal choice fell upon Mother Anne of St. Bartholomew, the sweet, cheery, lowly-hearted

cook at Nôtre Dame des Champs, to be the new Prioress of Pontoise. There was, of course, the obstacle of the Lay-Sister's white veil,[1] which St. Teresa herself had told Anne of St. Bartholomew she would have to sacrifice. Mother Anne of Jesus, however, was not so willing to exchange the white veil for the black, being as we know, 'a woman not friendly to changes,' but she yielded either to M. de Bérulle, or to her knowledge of St. Teresa's intentions, and the lowly Lay-Sister was clothed, in spite of her tears and prayers, with the black veil of the choir nuns, and what was a far heavier blow, she was immediately elected Prioress of Pontoise.

Mother Anne had made up her mind to install her herself in the new house, and went with four nuns, two Spaniards and two French novices, of whom Madame Jourdain was one, where there was a grand gathering for the occasion of all our old friends, Madame Acarie, Madame de Bérulle, M. de Brétigny, M. Gauthier, M. Gallemant, and M. de Bérulle. The two Princesses de Longueville and d'Estouteville went with the cavalcade as far as St. Denis, quite a day's journey for the lumbering coaches and horses of the time, where they were to sleep, and hear Mass at

[1] 'Sœur converse,' the cloistered Lay-Sister, holds quite a different rank from the 'Tourière,' Portress or out-Sister in a cloistered Order.

the martyr's shrine. Among other decayed and forgotten things in France, it is sad to think how greatly the devotion to St. Denis, the apostle of Paris, has withered away.

The next morning, the whole party, excepting always the Princesses, went on their way to Pontoise, stopping at the famous Abbey of Maubuisson, so full of associations with the name of the ill-fated Angelique Arnauld. Here the Carmelites were welcomed with gifts and all manner of kindnesses; and Madame Acarie was much diverted at receiving a visit from a man of business, making application for the office of receiver, or comptroller to the new convent. He had heard that the Carmelites would be very wealthy, and he had been recommended to apply early for the office. At Maubuisson, the *échevins*, or what we should now call the police, appeared to guard the nuns; from which we may gather that Pontoise was looked upon as quite in the provinces, or what in Spain is still called *el campo*. At the convent they found the Vicar-General waiting for them, while the streets were crowded with the simple, pious population, come out to meet and welcome 'the saints.' During the nuns' dinner, Madame Acarie waited on them as their servant, in spite of all their entreaties to the contrary.

The next day was Sunday, and the Blessed Sacra-

ment was exposed in the convent chapel, and the house solemnly put under St. Joseph's protection, as Mother Anne had wished. On Monday she gave the habit to four of M. Gallemant's congregation, who had been found quite prepared; and when giving them a short instruction afterwards, she used these memorable words: 'You have come into an Order so holy and perfect, that those who are faithful to its Rule and Constitutions, will pass at once from their death-bed to the Courts of Heaven.'

That same night, the novices became aware of a delicious, powerful fragrance floating through the house, which the Spanish nuns instantly recognized, and quietly told them that it was 'the perfume of St. Teresa.' Madame Jourdain (Louise of Jesus) remained at Pontoise, but the rest of the nuns went back immediately after the clothing to Nôtre Dame des Champs, leaving M. de Bérulle there for a few days, and M. de Brétigny for some months, to hear the confessions of the little swarm, and that they might not feel altogether outcast and deserted. It turned out that although M. du Val's house was big enough for their small numbers to start with, it soon became overcrowded with fresh arrivals, and M. de Marillac went to Madame Acarie to ask what they should do? She did not answer for a few minutes, and when he repeated his question, she said she

would take the whole responsibility upon herself, and that they must begin at once to build. They began to build accordingly, and the present convent was the result, while the astonishing fact remains on record, that throughout the building of the large convent and whole establishment of the community, funds were never once found wanting.

Other marvels were not lacking to the convent of Pontoise, upon which some very special favours were richly showered from its first foundation. Four French girls of M. Gallemant's little Congregation were chosen out as the first novices; and although they did not understand Spanish at all, they profited fully by the exhortations given by the Prioress, Anne of St. Bartholomew, in that language. Next to her sacrifice in leaving Spain, the greatest wrench Mother Anne of Jesus had known was her parting with Mother Beatrix, who was at first chosen Novice Mistress of Pontoise; but she did not long remain there, for Mother Anne recalled her and Madame Jourdain to Paris, exchanging for them Mdlle. d'Hannivel and Rose Lesgu.

The next event of importance was that the whole convent of the Incarnation was declared ready to receive the nuns, and to Madame Acarie's great joy, they all went in solemn procession from the little house to the new building, where Mother Anne was

enchanted to find the pattern of St. Teresa's houses carried out, and where the cloisters, separate cells, and breadth of room, were favourable to the silence and seclusion, as well as the general healthfulness, for which the Carmelite Rule so amply provides. For, as Mother Anne sagaciously observed, if the nuns are deprived of the facilities and conveniences for devotion which the Rule provides, they will seek others which are beside and beyond the Rule, and then all the early fervour and earnestness will decay.

But Mother Anne was not long left in the peaceful enjoyment of her new convent. Life throbs with pain so long as we are in this world, and whenever these life-throbs are checked or stilled, death must succeed. A house for a French foundation was offered at Dijon, and Mother Anne and several other nuns, among them her now inseparable companion, Mother Beatrix, 'without whom she did not like to take a single step,' were conducted by M. de Bérulle to their second house. Madame Acarie wished very much to be of the party, to lend her aid in establishing the nuns, but her husband would not allow her to undertake the journey.

Nor is this much to be wondered at, considering the length and peril of journeys at that time. They first halted at Troyes, when they were lodged in the Abbey of Nôtre Dame. The Abbess's 'coadjutor' was

a little girl of five years old, and this fact may well suggest what the condition of the abbey must have been. Mother Anne took the opportunity of speaking very frankly to the Abbess, and the five-year-old assistant, who became Abbess at fifteen, afterwards actually carried out a full reform of the abbey. From Troyes the nuns journeyed to Clairvaux, where Mother Anne was delighted to venerate the cell and garden of St. Bernard, and was allowed to carry away some of the dust of his mouldering bedstead, which was most religiously preserved. At length they reached Dijon, where, after the Mass and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and the solemn dedication of the house to St. Joseph, M. de Bérulle left them and went back to Paris. His labours with the Order were, in fact, unending, but they were labours full of consolation. He was present at the profession of Mdlle. de Fonteines, who had been allowed to know, during her retreat, that she would suffer much in her religious life, and be calumniated by even her own Order. 'And then, Father, perhaps you too will forsake me,' she added, in real grief. 'No, my child, with God's help, that will never be,' M. de Bérulle replied; and it was a prophetic saying.

When Mother Anne of St. Bartholomew was ordered to go back to the Incarnation, she was actually obliged to be wrapped up in her nephew's

cloak and hat, and taken away by her aunt and M. de Bérulle in the night from Pontoise, lest the people should refuse to let her go. For the love and veneration of the Pontesians was so great, that they would certainly have mobbed the carriage, and not allowed her to leave the town, if they had known. Even the community was kept in ignorance of her departure till the next morning.

After the profession of several eminent novices, M. de Bérulle was obliged to travel again to Dijon to bring back Mother Isabel of the Angels; for a fourth foundation had been arranged for Amiens, and she was elected Prioress for that house. Mother Anne and Mother Beatrix opposed this election as strongly as they could, and besought Mother Isabel to go with them to the Low Countries, where the Infanta of Spain had offered them foundations, and where they hoped to be directed by the Carmelite Fathers. But Mother Isabel remained loyal to her first love. She had been chosen for France, she said, and she had chosen France as her portion, nor would she quit it for any other country. She therefore bade good-bye to her dear Spanish companions with many tears, firmly believing that in this world she should see their faces no more; and after four day's painful journey, being suffering very much the whole way, she reached the Incarnation Convent

with M. de Bérulle. She remained there a little while, to the great joy of Mother Anne of St. Bartholomew, and then went on to Amiens to open the new convent.

M. Gallemant, M. du Val, and Madame Acarie, accompanied her, and as usual, lent their utmost help in this responsible and heavy charge. Madame Acarie transacted all the business with the architect, who was astonished at her capacity and the fund of information she showed. The more difficult business of examining and deciding upon the reception of the postulants who presented themselves, was also, as usual, laid upon her shoulders, and she performed it well. The wife of the Governor of Amiens, Madame de Trégny, went to meet the nuns, and after taking them to the Cathedral, visited them in their temporary house.[2] The next day being Whitsunday, the Blessed Sacrament was solemnly exposed, and the convent was newly named 'Le Saint Esprit.' On Whit-Monday the four first postulants were clothed, and Madame Acarie saw each of them alone before she returned to Paris. Some excellent instructions of hers are preserved that were given to these novices, especially on mental prayer. She dwelt much on the necessity of forming certain definite ideas and charac-

[2] The empty convent of the Sœurs Blanches, where they remained for two years.

teristics of God in prayer; not thinking of Him, or applying to Him vaguely, but as our Father, our Physician, a great King, and the like, that such characteristics might remain fixed in the mind, and produce definite exact results.

Two other foundations, and only two, were planted and watered by Madame Acarie. These were at Tours and Rouen, the fifth and sixth of France. The Parliament at Rouen, then quite separate, and an important legislative body, refused the letters-patent which were necessary to the establishment of a religious order in the city, and if Madame Acarie, whose courage was equal to her prudence, had not been present, the foundation would probably have fallen through.

The Congregation of St. Geneviève had been gradually emptied of all those who showed any signs of a Carmelite vocation, but there remained in the house several excellent young women with religious vocations, but not to an order so austere as St. Teresa's. Madame Acarie had turned the matter over a good deal in her mind, and before closing the house finally, she resolved to found an educational order in which these young women could usefully find a place. The idea, being at that time new, was of course scouted by most of her friends, but Madame Acarie was not discouraged. She won over M. de Marillac to the

plan, and found a benefactress in her cousin, Madame de Ste. Beuve, a young, independent, and very wealthy widow, whose high principle, prudence, and delicacy were so remarkable, that she could be the intimate friend of Henry the Fourth, and yet preserve herself untouched by himself and his Court.

Madame de Ste. Beuve interested herself so warmly in the establishment of this new educational work, that she willingly promised all, and more than all, that her cousin asked. She sold the greater part of her splendid carriages and horses, her rich plate, and furniture, and dismissed a large retinue of servants, to command means ample enough for her plans. Newly-founded Ursulines[3] were brought from Provence to direct the house, and were erected into an Order under the Rule of St. Augustine, with a fourth vow for the education of girls. The Ursulines from Provence did not wish to remain, but Madame Acarie obtained others, who instructed and established twelve of M. Gallemant's Congregandistes, and Madame de Ste. Beuve had the happiness of establishing more than thirty Ursuline houses before she died a most holy death in the Ursuline house in the Faubourg St. Jacques.[4]

[3] Then a young Congregation without cloister.

[4] The same sad notice has to be repeated again and again; that the tomb was still to be seen there in 1792; the terrible year of Vandalism, when so great a multitude of precious records were destroyed. Madame de Ste. Beuve died in 1630.

CHAPTER VI.

Sister Mary.

MADAME ACARIE'S constant and arduous work was interrupted, after the foundation at Rouen, by a dangerous illness, which brought her to the brink of the grave. She recovered from it, but in another year or two again fell so ill, that she received the last sacraments. The nuns at Nôtre Dame des Champs were much grieved at the news, and sent their most precious relic, St. Teresa's cloak, which they had brought with them from Spain, to lay upon the bed. Madame Acarie then slept for some hours, and after a while, the abscess in her side burst, and she finally recovered, after a fever of twenty-five days. During this time, when she edified and sustained her daughters and nurses by the beautiful peace and submission with which she suffered, the Jesuit Provincial Père Binet, visited her, and comforted her very much on two points; one, her dread of her own insignificance and nothingness, and fear lest the thread which bound her to God should be broken by Him; the other, that she had never really loved Him.

Madame Acarie recovered, in spite of all reason to believe that her life hung by a mere thread; but then her husband fell ill at his country house at Ivry, and it was made known to her that he would never again leave his sick bed. She sent for her faithful servant, Edmond de Messa, her humble coadjutor in all good works, and told him that he must undertake to acquaint his master with his state. Edmond could not believe it; his master was cheerful, alert, and full of life. Nevertheless, he knew that Madame Acarie had never yet been mistaken when she so positively declared what was going to take place. He went to M. Acarie's room accordingly, and let him know that he was more dangerously ill than he seemed to be aware. M. Acarie was at first much startled, but then insisted on Edmond telling him exactly the truth. The faithful servant replied that Monsieur was in great danger, and his master then asked that the priest might be sent for to anoint him. His wife and three sons were then summoned, and M. Acarie received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction with great resignation and fervour, making all the responses aloud. He gave his children his blessing, and spoke at some length in the most beautiful way of his wife, thanking her for all she had done for him, for the way in which she had borne with him, and begged

her to forgive everything she had ever had to suffer from him. M. Acarie sank very rapidly after this, and although he lingered a week longer, it was in great suffering, but he only became unconscious about an hour before his death. His remains were carried to Paris, where he was buried at his parish church of St. Gervais in the chapel belonging to his family.

Every obstacle was now removed between Madame Acarie and the long-nourished desire of her heart, to be received as a Carmelite lay-sister, and to spend the remainder of her days as 'an abject' in the House of her God. For this end every action of her life for many years had cried out with a loud cry in the ears of her Beloved, and the hour had been deferred only that her reward might be the more abundant, and that she might come with fuller hands into the sanctuary. But even now, in the very hour of fulfilment, a fresh delay intervened, for either from over-fatigue during her husband's illness or some other cause, Madame Acarie was seized with a more acute attack of pain and inflammation in her lame leg, and she was so much cast down by it, that M. du Val was obliged to rebuke her for her failure of courage and trust. She humbly answered that it was not the suffering she minded, but that she was afraid her bodily infirmities were

now so great that she should be refused admittance into the Order. M. du Val was almost amused at the idea of the foundress of the French Carmelites being refused admittance into the Order, and told her that considering what she had done for them, they would too gladly receive her into any one of their houses. Madame Acarie felt encouraged by what he said, and as soon as her leg was sufficiently restored, she went to Nôtre Dame des Champs, and took up her abode in an outer room near the tourière's quarters. Her children supposed that she had gone to rest there for a time after the fatigue she had undergone, but it was really the first step towards making her 'demand,' which she soon afterwards did in the humblest tone possible; so that, as M. du Val says, 'You would have thought it was some one who had never had anything to do with the French Carmelites, instead of "having founded the Order in France."'

The only difficulty raised was that of receiving her as a lay-sister. The Superiors represented to her that she was scarcely fit to do anything in the kitchen, or undertake to do any of the lay-sisters' work, and that she would be much more useful among the choir nuns. Madama Acarie was so unusually roused by the opposition to what had been declared to her by St. Teresa, that she said if she

were refused this favour she would go to the world's end to seek it. M. du Val then saw that there was more in her persistence than he discerned, and he left the decision of the matter to M. de Bérulle, her usual confessor, who said that the voice of God to His servant must be obeyed. Madame Acarie had also asked to be sent to the 'poorest and most remote of the French convents,' which was then probably the house at Bordeaux. But it was decided that she would be too far removed there from the Superiors, who were accustomed to consult as much as to guide her; and, at the same time, it was thought better she should not be in Paris, where she would draw too many visitors to the convent. The convent at Amiens was finally proposed, then probably two days' journey from Paris, and of which M. Acarie had been a benefactor. When these arrangements had been made, Madame Acarie was so overwhelmed with joy, gratitude, and almost amazement at the grace she had received, that for a whole fortnight she shed nearly continual tears.

It was in February, 1614, that Madame Acarie set out for Amiens, still only able to travel in a litter or sort of ambulance, and by very short stages. The first was to Pontoise, which she so loved as always to call it her 'own' convent. In fact, the community was almost entirely composed of girls

whom she had trained and formed. Here she slept, and had time to talk to a few of the nuns, especially to our old friend Madame Jourdain, Sister Aimée of Jesus. They all wanted to see and consult her, but she humbly said that 'she had not leave, and as she was now just going to begin to learn, she could not pretend to teach any one.' In this way, by short journeys, she reached Amiens in three days. Edmond de Messa, who had entered the newly-founded French Oratory as a lay-brother, was allowed to go with his late mistress to Amiens, and afterwards testified that it was like travelling with an angel. One morning, she had gone to the church to Mass, and the curé refused to allow her to communicate because she had not been to confession, and immediately Madame Acarie knelt down, and made a humble confession to him in sight of the village people, who were come to hear Mass, and who said that her simple obedience and humility gave them fresh devotion and desire to serve God. When the litter drew up at the outer gates, Edmond de Messa and the two portresses helped Madame Acarie to the convent door, where they found the Prioress and the whole community gathered as if to receive some very important personage. Madame Acarie took no notice of this ceremony, but instantly knelt and prostrated on the

floor before the Prioress, begging to be received among them as a poor woman, who wished to end her days in religion. The nuns were so touched by the reality of her lowliness and her living faith in the grace she asked, that they never could speak of that day afterwards without emotion.

When her request had been granted, Madame Acarie went off in a kind of ecstasy to the kitchen, and telling the nuns there that she had come 'to be kitchen-maid,' she set to work preparing the vegetables, washing dishes, and actively moving about without the least help. The truth was, however, that she was quite unconscious of the pain she was undergoing, and from that day forward, with two exceptions,[1] she never walked at all without crutches or a stick. The Prioress at Amiens then was Mother Isabel of Jesus Christ, a Flemish Calvinist of noble birth, who had come to France with the Princess of Orange, when, chiefly through the means of the Jesuit Father Coton, she became reconciled to the Church. She soon felt a wish to carry out the spiritual life farther, and became one of the many noble-born novices at Nôtre Dame des Champs. After some years' experience of governing as Prioress, she decided her preference for the Carmelite Fathers, and in company with her whole

[1] One of these was the day of her clothing.

community (then at Bourges), left France for the Low Countries in 1621. Judging from some of her sayings that remain, it is probable that Mother Isabel, like Mother Anne of Jesus, was a little strained and rigid in her enthusiastic enforcement of austerity and extraordinary acts of penance.[2]

It does not require much effort of the imagination to conceive the joy of Madame Acarie under this Superior, and surrounded by a community of nuns of equal fervour. She went about the house saying to herself, and writing occasionally to M. de Marillac: 'Oh! what sublime virtue is practised in this house! The (outer) world knows only the semblance of virtue, the reality is to be seen nowhere but in the cloister.' Her great soul expanded in this reality, exactly as a bird that has been long encaged unfolds its wings and cleaves the air with delight, soaring upwards till its earthly haunts vanish in the glory of the expanded horizon. In this rapid spiritual growth nothing seemed hard or severe to her, and her progress was so marked that the Superiors decided to give her the novice's habit before three months had gone by, though the usual rule for lay-sisters was to make a year's postulancy. In spite of her reluctance and

[2] For instance: 'It would be well for convents if there were neither turn nor parlour, that there might be absolute silence with the outer world.' 'Nuns do not go into a religious Order to live long.'

objections, therefore, M. du Val clothed Madame Acarie with the habit and white veil of her lowly estate on Low Monday, 1614, and as the Annunciation fell on that day she received the name of Sister Mary of the Incarnation, by which she is chiefly known. There is a singular aptitude in her receiving the lay-sisters veil on that feast, for her life had been founded upon the words, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to Thy word.'

Barbara Acarie was now eight-and-forty years old, but on the day of her clothing it was thought by those who watched her kneeling motionless and with her meek eyes veiled with their large lids, that she had never looked younger or more lovely. When the last question was put to her, whether she had come into the religious state purely for the love of God, no answer was returned; she was frightened at the sublime depths of perfection that opened before her, and shrank from declaring that she could ever act from such pure motives. Still lost, as it were, in these thoughts, she was led out of the choir to don her new garb, and the nuns then saw her face shining with inward light.

At the moment of the prostration the Prioress saw that she was rapt into ecstatic contemplation, and from time to time the nuns were obliged to support and direct her till the ceremony was ended, and

they could close the grating and leave her in a stall, where she remained in the same state for more than an hour.

The clothing Sister Mary had taken off was carefully preserved, and it is attested that many sick persons were cured by touching portions of it.

CHAPTER VII.

Within the Grating.

THE record of Sister Mary's life henceforth is not striking to the outward eye. Her building and founding labours were over for the present; her journeyings to and fro had ceased; even her consultations with the Superiors and with the great ones of the court were exchanged for the eloquent silence of contemplation and prayer that yet made no sign except in the life which it fed. She could scarcely move without help from her cell to the kitchen, and whatever work she got through there was done sitting down. Placidly seated, therefore, at the rough deal table, Sister Mary spent the days in washing and picking the vegetables so largely used by the community, preparing the simple meals, cleaning and cutting up the fish, and keeping the kitchen utensils fresh and

sweet. Whatever she could find to do, or that she was allowed to take in hand, was done with the exquisite care of one who truly labours for God, realizing in some degree the perfection of all His works. Even when in the infirmary she was still allowed to pick and prepare the vegetables, herbs, and pulse, which seemed to be her favourite occupation. But, in truth, it is a kind of wrong to her even to say this, for one of her own community wrote of her that she cleaned the lamps, laid and lit the fires, swept the rooms, washed vegetables, and put them in the pots, laid the tables, and cleared them away, with one equal joy and delight, representing to herself always, in whatever she took in hand, that it was thus our Lord laboured in the house of Nazareth.

Sister Mary generally sat at work before a print which represented our Lord in His hidden life working at Nazareth; and when once one of the elder nuns told her that she ought to work with more moderation, she answered, 'Look how the Child Jesus worked, and how humbly He did such lowly things. With such an example before us, can we be idle, or grumble at the humbleness of our work?' Sister Mary's obedience and reverence for her Superiors were as much an example to the community as her love of work. She called the bell 'the Great King's call,' and the instant it began to sound she

threw down everything she was doing to go to prayer, meals, or conference, as the hour might be. She was most exact in the two branches of poverty, neither appropriating or wishing to appropriate anything given to her to use with attachment, or wasting the least thing. She spoke of poverty always as 'the wealth of convents.' One day she was trying to cobble her 'alpargatas,'[1] which had long been coming to pieces, and one of the nuns told her that it was lost labour, for they were only fit to throw away. Sister Mary meekly answered that she dared not so act against the spirit of poverty, for there were many poor women who went worse shod. She also begged to have her old habits pieced and mended as long as they would hold together, and in the winter as soon as she had warmed herself with a few sticks, she put the fire out again, saying that poor women always did the same. She asked leave to have the picture in her cell taken away, because the other nuns had not one like it, and gave away a favourite rosary blessed by St. Charles Borromeo, lest she should appropriate it with attachment. One day when she was ill in the infirmary, and was busy cobbling the old alpargatas of the community, some

[1] The Carmelites retain this Spanish name for the sort of sandals which they wear, made of plaited hemp and coarse canvas tied with string or tape. When they go out they put the alpargatas into wooden clogs.

one wondered and objected to her doing such 'menial' work. Her answer is full of true dignity: 'Menial work is known only in the world. Everything is great in the house of God. In religion whatever we can do is great and ennobling.'

Sister Mary was very fond, perhaps we might say too fond, of accusing herself of faults that she had never committed, or of exaggerating, with the exaggeration common to holy souls, the harm she had done by her failing in the necessary acts of virtue. Recognizing this over-minuteness, the Prioress one day told her of it, and ordered her as a penance to stand at the refectory door and ask each Sister as she went in to the meal to kiss her feet. Sister Mary's obedience in this painful act was complete, but she shed over it many tears of exceeding humiliation.

Humility, the crown and mother of virtues, shone out more and more clearly in her as the days went on, and was marked by God's favour in many unusual ways. The sense of the lapse of time began to be lost when she was praying and meditating, and thus the veil between time and eternity waxed thinner and more transparent. It became almost her normal state, when before the Blessed Sacrament or at sight of the crucifix in her cell, to be rapt into ecstasy, and to lose all consciousness of the material world. Again and again it happened that she took her crucifix

in her hand, exclaiming, 'Ah! my Jesus! my sweetest Jesus!' and then remained fixed and motionless, utterly lost in the contemplation of God's infinite love. Already, therefore, the foretaste of Heaven was overpowering her soul with sweetness, and blotting out all thought and knowledge of the pleasures of time as the light clouds flee before the sun's rays at dawn.

Some of the most beautiful of all supernatural gifts, those free gifts of the Love which covers the wastes of the earth with velvet turf and causes the flowers to spring in its wildest nooks, were showered upon her. Often, in the infirmary, Sister Mary heard the sweetest strains of music, or was made aware of a strange, fragrant perfume, unlike any other, which floated round her wherever she went. Once, when she had decided within herself that this perfume was the smell of incense from the sacristy, it suddenly ceased, and she was obliged to recognize a beautiful distinct gift of God to herself. She was so confused at being often found in a state of ecstasy, and at being awakened from it, that she left off invoking St. Teresa, to whose agency she ascribed the favours thus poured upon her. But she was immediately interiorly rebuked by St. Teresa for this, and was then satisfied to leave herself 'as an empty vessel entirely in God's hand, to be filled with what He

would.' The numbers of sick persons who sent to the convent to ask for her prayers could not be counted, and among the multitude who were cured was the young Duke Henry de Longueville.

When the time of her profession drew near, Sister Mary asked leave to buy a good many holy pictures, chiefly representing the various mysteries of our Lord's Life and His Blessed Mother's, and wrote at the back of each some words suitable to the picture or the condition of soul of the person to whom she wished to send the little memorial. It was observed that all these short counsels or reminders showed the utmost discernment of soul, a minute recollection of their wants, and the tenderest sympathy with all her old friends. Before the day of profession Sister Mary spoke so strongly to M. de Marillac of her unfitness to make her vows, that, well as he knew her, he was taken aback by her earnest self-depreciation, and said: 'Then you wish to leave the convent?' 'No,' she emphatically replied, 'but I should like the nuns never to be bound to me, and that they should allow me to remain in some corner of the house, serving them as far as I can.'

It is true that if Madame Acarie had not been what she was, besides being the Foundress of the Carmelite Order in France, there might have been some difficulty in receiving a lay-sister who was

scarcely able to creep about the kitchen, and whose very vocal prayer of the rule was cut short by her frequent ecstasies. Sometimes, even, while reciting her penance, she was suddenly rapt into contemplation, when all possibility of vocal prayer was suspended for some length of time. It is not surprising that she should object to M. de Marillac, 'How can I possibly undertake to repeat so many *Paters?*'

Her scruples were cut short by an interior admonition that if the Superiors were willing to receive her she had no right to deprive herself of the privilege of being a Carmelite. The Superiors showed themselves certainly willing indeed; for although so ill that she was carried in her bed to an infirmary looking into the church, she was there allowed to receive Communion and make her vows in the presence of M. de Bérulle, the Prioress, and the whole community, in the Passion Week of 1615. With her own hand, on that day, therefore, 'Barbara Avrillot, widow of the late noble Pierre Acarie,' wrote out and signed the following simple act of profession:

'I, Sister Mary of the Incarnation, make my profession, and promise obedience, chastity, and poverty, to God our Lord, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to the Reverend Fathers Superior as now established by the Bull of the late Pope Clement VIII., and to their successors, according to the primitive rule of

Mount Carmel, which is without mitigation, and until death.'

The whole of that day was too short for the thanksgivings which went up like fragrant incense from that grand, single heart. Again and again, unwearied, her sweet, frail voice burst out into the eighty-eighth Psalm: *Misericordias Domini in æternum cantabo*—'God of mercies, what shall I render unto Thee for all that Thou hast done unto me?' 'What a marvel of grace! What wonderful goodness and mercy to me—*even to me!*'

Such were the hearts and such was the strength given to the heroic women of the seventeenth century when they had once set their face to serve God.

CHAPTER VIII.

'*Until Death.*'

ALMOST immediately after her profession Sister Mary grew worse, and received the last sacraments. Probably the estatic joy and consolations she had felt entirely overthrew the small powers of that frail body, and her death was hourly expected by the community, who eagerly sought leave to visit her one by one or in small parties, to profit by what they thought the last instructions of their true Mother and Mis-

tress in virtue. Throughout this sickness, though the thin, sweet voice could scarcely be raised, Sister Mary reverted perpetually to the words, so often heard in the hotel Acarie, at St. Geneviève, at Ivry, and at Nôtre Dame des Champs, that they may be called the key-note of her life.

'My dear Sisters, we are in truth only such as we are in God's sight.' 'Why should we take such pains to be thought well of by men, when we are only such as God sees us to be?' 'Let us fix our hearts upon God. He only changes not, will never fail us, is ever the same.'

When the priest brought her the Viaticum, wishing to hear what she would say, he asked her if she verily and in truth believed that our Lord was present there in the Host? Tears streamed from her sweet eyes, and with deep feeling she exclaimed: 'Yes, I believe! Ah, yes, I believe! Come, Lord Jesus! Come, my sweet Lord!' and was immediately lost in the Presence of God. During the whole day the community were kneeling round her bed, near which the blessed taper was lit, expecting every moment to be her last; when suddenly this thought crossed the mind of one of the nuns, who was much pained at witnessing such suffering: 'How long do you mean to keep us in this suspense?'

Instantly Sister Mary turned her head towards her,

and with a sweet, faint smile, startled the nun by echoing her thought: 'How long do you mean to keep us in this suspense?'

Then the Prioress commanded her to ask for her own recovery from God, and sighing deeply, Sister Mary fixed her eyes on the crucifix, and said: 'My God, if it should please Thee to give me back my life, let it be only to suffer. I can ask it for nothing but that.'

No sooner had this heroic act of obedience and sacrifice been made, than a great change was seen in her face, and she actually began to recover to a more healthy state than she had known for many years. In fact, her activity and energies so fully returned that her youth seemed renewed, and she was elected Prioress of the Convent at Amiens when Mother Isabel's six years of office had expired. Sister Mary, however, who still wrote and spoke of herself persistently as a 'poor kitchen-maid,' was not to be easily persuaded to give up her 'better part' of the lowest in the house of God. When she was told that every vote but one at the election had been in her favour, she exclaimed with energy:

'Yes, indeed, we should have a fine Prioress!' and M. du Val was as much surprised at this informal election of a lay sister as herself. He explained to the community, who instanced the case of Sister

Anne of St. Bartholomew, that as Sister Mary's rank in religion had been distinctly decided supernaturally, it would require a fresh supernatural intimation before it could be changed again.

Much to Sister Mary's joy, therefore, there was a fresh election, and the nuns, though with great reluctance, chose a new Prioress from their own ranks, who was Mdlle. de Viole. But as they were determined to secure one of the family, they elected Mdlle. Acarie, now Sister Mary of Jesus, Sub-Prioress, when her own mother delighted the whole community by her strict obedience and reverence. This was her last legacy of example to the convent at Amiens, for she was shortly afterwards removed to Pontoise.

There were many excellent reasons for this step. In the first place it became clear that the life and strength given back to her had been for the sake of others for a time, and that she was not to be long detained from her richly-earned rest. Again, the supernatural graces she received were showered upon her in increasing abundance, and the Superiors were anxious that she should be more within their reach. And, lastly, the convent at Pontoise was in great straits from poverty, and the Superiors knew that the very presence of Madame Acarie would bring it an affluence of gifts.

The eve of her leaving Amiens, Sister Mary went humbly from cell to cell, begging pardon of all the nuns for the bad example she had given them, and taking leave of them with tears, asking their prayers and thanking them warmly for all their kindness to her. M. de Marillac sent his own carriage and servant for her, and she left Amiens with two nuns and a novice the next morning. On the third day's journey, at sunrise, as the level golden rays streamed into the carriage, Sister Mary exclaimed: 'Ah! if we only knew how the Divine Son lights up the souls into which He shines! I see Him, I behold Him!" She would have been instantly rapt into an ecstasy, if the nuns had not caught hold of her habit, shaken it, and brought her back to herself.

M. du Val had advised the Prioress of Pontoise to do nothing without Sister Mary's advice, and as soon as she had learned that the convent was in debt, though a great deal of building was necessary before it could be called finished, she bestirred herself as in old days, and was soon on a move in the midst of plans, workmen, and building materials. The Prioress seems to have been a person of only ordinary mind and stamp, and she often complained to Sister Mary that she would die soon, and leave them with a heavy debt on their shoulders. Sister Mary, however, went forward under the bidding of

another voice than that of earthly prudence. She bought a large garden, built an ample infirmary and several hermitages, especially the hermitage of Nôtre Dame de Grace, repaired and decorated the church, filled it with pictures and panelling, and bought materials for a splendid red vestment to be embroidered by the nuns. She put fresh life into the community while this was going forward, continually repeating: 'Courage, my dear Sisters! All your work is for God. I only wish I could help you to work.' The Superiors had told the nuns to speak quite freely to Sister Mary about themselves, and they gained largely by so doing. She even let them know beforehand what they wished to say, and opened their own condition, faults, needs, and spiritual state so completely to their view that they owned that Sister Mary knew them far better than they knew themselves. Crowds of ladies came also from Paris to tell her their troubles, to consult her as to their difficulties, and to ask her whether she thought they were called to a conventual life, or to be heads of families in the ordinary way. And it was not ladies only who sought her counsel. The Duke de Nevers went to ask her advice as to his mode of life and profession, and the eminent ecclesiastics of the diocese were glad of her suggestions in their relations with their clergy.

There was one man, however, and that one whose sympathy and support were most important to her, whom the lowly lay-sister was not afraid to oppose to the utmost, when there was any question of the Order and its true spirit, in spite of his love for it, which perhaps he never thoroughly sounded to the depths. This was M. de Bérulle, with whom Sister Mary had long and sharp discussions as to certain novelties which he wished to introduce among the Carmelites, and which, as she justly considered, were not part of St. Teresa's plan, nor according to her spirit.

The first of these innovations was a fourth vow, to which M. de Bérulle wished the nuns to bind themselves for life, a kind of serfdom to our Lord and His Beloved Mother, which in itself, and in its spirit of bondage, was distasteful. The second addition which he had made was the daily adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which M. de Bérulle actually established for a time at Nôtre Dame des Champs; when the nuns took it in turn to pray before the Blessed Sacrament the whole of the day. None of the other convents would agree to carry out this plan, and it was soon given up also at Nôtre Dame des Champs, being found to be incompatible with the habit established by St. Teresa of alternate manual work with prayer. All that was

retained was the practice of having the Blessed Sacrament exposed from Mass till Benediction on all Thursdays.

It is sad to be obliged to record that M. de Bérulle was seriously offended with Sister Mary after she had vainly expostulated with him as to these novelties, and shown her unalterable decision not to accept them herself; and he was equally displeased with M. Gallemant and M. du Val, who disliked the innovations to the rule as much as Sister Mary. After all M. de Bérulle's heroic labour and self-sacrifice in the service of the Carmelite Order, it was most painful, both to herself and the other Superiors, to discern that the love of power and an obstinate attachment to his own views were still rooted in this eminent man. Yet the truth must be recognized, and the whole of this transaction, which clouds our final view of 'le petit Dom Pedro,' in regard to the Carmelites, gives us some insight into the sufferings of Mother Anne of Jesus while under his direction, and inclines us to be more indulgent towards her leaving France for the Low Countries and the government of the Carmelite Fathers. At their last interview M. de Bérulle was harsh enough to keep Sister Mary in the parlour, knowing her weak and fragile state of health, for several hours, gradually winding himself up to such

a pitch of unreasonable irritation, as to end by telling her that she was 'a person of a very narrow and ill-informed mind, and that she had never taken anything in hand that she had not spoiled it.' After which exhibition of temper, he abruptly left her and went away, and she never saw him again.

M. du Val, whom Sister Mary asked to be sent for immediately, to shield herself from the anguish of her own self-reproach, was in some way hindered, and came only when she was laid upon her death-bed. He was then most deeply grieved at the pain which that uncontrolled conversation had inflicted upon her, and he said to the Prioress: 'God has willed that this holy creature should suffer as well as myself, and we must submit. But such words to use to her! Such violence!'

But the day had at last come when no words of man could ever wound Sister Mary more, for shortly afterwards she fell ill, and this time no hindering prayers or heroic acts of obedience were required of her to delay her final release. She was taken with her last sickness in February, 1618, when even partial paralysis did not prevent the convulsions, or paroxysms of pain, compared with which all her former sufferings had been light. Between the fits of agony, M. du Val gave her the Viaticum, when she spoke aloud to our Lord, unconsciously, with the most

loving and touching affection. Sister Mary now needed, indeed, all the spiritual consolation that she could receive, for her sufferings were prolonged so far beyond what is usual, that they seemed to fill up the whole chord of human anguish. At times, so great a dread of death was allowed to overwhelm her, that the bed shook with her trembling; at times even Satan visibly appeared to her, and although she then acknowledged that it had happened to her before, she owned also that she had never yet felt that anguish of terror at his coming that she was now allowed to suffer. Some times, when not quite herself, she besought God to release her; but at other times, she prayed to suffer yet more, and to accompany our Lord more closely in His Passion. She was indeed following narrowly in His footsteps, and He was drawing her nearer and nearer each hour into the depths of His sacred wounds. She lingered on in this lengthened death agony from February till Easter week, in the middle of April, in continual and apparently ever-varying suffering, till on the Tuesday in Easter week, M. du Val found her in a fit of strong convulsions, and apparently unconscious of his presence. Nevertheless, the Prioress hastily brought him a surplice and stole, and took him quickly into the infirmary, where all the nuns were assembled. M. du Val flew for the holy oils, and began to anoint the dying Sister,

who had asked many times if he were come. He had only touched her with the holy unction once or twice, when, gently closing her eyes, Sister Mary calmly breathed her last, and went to her rest.

As M. du Val was about to begin the *Subvenite*, he told the nuns that it had been made known to him that Sister Mary of the Incarnation was at that moment in the Heavenly city, beholding the Face of God.

. . . . . .

As soon as the tidings were made known that Sister Mary was dead, the outer Church of the Carmelites was filled with a crowd of people, who passed the words one to another, "The Saint is dead! the Saint is dead!" and asked to be told some details of her last end. The nuns, in spite of the length of her illness, seemed not able to realize that the pure soul had at last left them, and that they must go forward henceforward without her lofty counsel and ever-present example as their stay and guide. M. du Val strove to comfort them, but said that he needed comfort himself much more than they. He could not be satisfied without securing that the heart of the holy woman should be taken out, according to the strange custom of the time, and separately buried; and he himself buried the leaden casket in the con-

vent cemetery, bidding the nuns tell no one where it was. It would almost seem that some prophetic foreshadowing of the revolutionary desecration about to come must have fallen upon him.

The body of the servant of God was then exposed on an open bier in the nun's choir, and the crowds that pressed against the grating to see it were so great that the police ('sheriff's men') were obliged to be stationed at the entrance to keep them back. The people clamoured for something that she had worn, for which purpose her veil, scapular, and upper clothing, were cut into small fragments, and given to those most in need, or the sick. After all these relics had been distributed, multitudes brought their rosaries, crucifixes, and medals to touch the body, and two constant streams of people coming and going flowed all day to and from the poor convent of Pontoise, richer with more than all the world's wealth could bestow on it by the relics of the lay-sister that lay within its walls.

Every one of all who came and went marvelled at the wonderful beauty of the calm sweet face, white as marble, smooth and unwrinkled as the face of a girl, and shining as with some inner light. With large lids closed, and joined hands, she looked as if lost in prayer; and more than one great, worldly dignitary of the Church was changed to a new and more spiritual

life after seeing that face. Crowds of those not intimate with Sister Mary, who came with the usual Catholic piety to pray for the dead, were interiorly hindered, and openly besought 'the Saint's' intercession.

Office was said for her 'as for a Prioress,' by M. du Val's permission, and then this faithful, unchanged and unchangeable friend buried her in the convent cloisters, attended by the whole town of Pontoise, and by many strangers from far and near. M. de Marillac put up a monument to her, and wrote her epitaph. It is sad indeed, throughout these last offices, to find no mention of M. de Bérulle's name, except that notice of the death was sent him. It is remarkable, though by no means so remarkable then as it would be now, when holiness of living, especially the holy living of a poor hidden lay-sister, would not fly, as then from mouth to mouth, that the fame of Sister Mary of the Incarnation went abroad immediately with the most heart-stirring effect. Her grave became a shrine and a centre of pilgrimage, and on her anniversary, the concourse of pilgrims of all ranks and conditions was so great that they quite filled the church, the cloisters, and the court-yard, and overflowed into the streets. Most of those who were there carried away some of the dust from the burial-place; Masses were said, novenas made, and

vows offered that by her intercession some favour might be gained. Thither came St. Francis de Sales, the great Bishop of Geneva, and thither, too, his spiritual child, St. Jane Frances de Chantal, to honour the poor Carmelite lay-sister, and to ask her prayers; and the two Queens, Mary de' Medici, and Anne of Austria, bowed their crowned heads to the earth, each whispering her own tale of sorrow and her desperate needs.

M. de Marillac's monument was a costly one, though, according to the vitiated taste of his time, it was loaded with statues, urns, marbles, and inscriptions. The statues are said still to exist in the possession of private families at Pontoise; the monument disappeared in what may be called "the Satanic year" of 1792. But whatever the style and taste of the monument may have been, Sister Mary's virtues needed no memorial structures to call her to mind. Very soon after her death, miraculous circumstances began to manifest themselves to so many different persons, as to put the fact of her heroic sanctity beyond a doubt. And first, that special most beautiful form of supernatural agency with which she was so often favoured when living, of a peculiar fragrant odour which floated up from her grave. From the Prioress, who went there to pray, and the various nuns who strewed flowers upon

it on her anniversary, to Marie de' Medici, Anne of Austria, M. de Marillac, and many of the clergy, witness is given by them all to the delicious, singular, most fragrant perfume which floated about them, and—as is the characteristic of this odour of the Saints—opened their minds at the same time to a clearer or higher discernment of spiritual things.

Nor was one sense only supernaturally affected; for many times after her death Sister Mary was seen shining with light and unspeakable beauty, especially by the Prioress at Dieppe, who was one of her special spiritual children. To this Prioress, Mother Agnes of Jesus, Sister Mary appeared at the moment of death, telling her that she was immediately going to Heaven. A few days afterwards, when, in spite of the radiant vision, Mother Agnes was still grieving for the loss of her dear Sister, she appeared to her again in her habit, shining with glory.

'Sister!' said Mother Agnes, in awe and amazement, 'then I really believe you did not go to Purgatory at all!'

'It is so,' the blessed soul replied; 'God's goodness to me is so great that He freed me at once, though I had lived fifty-two years on earth.'

She disappeared; but still not quite comforted, Mother Agnes was allowed another vision of Sister Mary and St. Teresa together, shining with exactly

the same degree of glory. But Mother Agnes, whose reasoning powers seem to have been clear and strong, had still a difficulty to overcome. She had thought that the virginal glory of St. Teresa, their foundress, ought to be greater than that degree granted to the widowed Barbara Acarie; and then she was allowed, once more, another final and beautiful vision of St. Teresa and Sister Mary of the Incarnation, during which she heard an interior voice saying, that the multitude of good works wrought by the widow lay-sister were counted as fully equal to the perpetual virginity of the Doctor and Saint.

Thus, then, from the beginning of her life to the end, runs the golden cord unbroken; and we lay down the record of Barbara Avrillot with the words of the great Apostle sounding in our ears: 'And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.'[1]

In 1635, Pope Urban VIII. first forbade any steps being taken as to the veneration of deceased persons who had died in the odour of sanctity, until fifty years had elapsed from the time of their death. He also forbade any popular evidences of veneration of persons not yet beatified. The Archbishop of Sens, therefore, in whose diocese Pontoise was, went to the convent in 1636, and, in obedience to this decree,

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

stripped the grave of Sister Mary of the Incarnation of the crowd of votive offerings, pictures, &c., that hung there. Louis XIV. and Anne of Austria afterwards besought two successive Popes to allow this time which he had mentioned of fifty years to be shortened in Sister Mary's case, but this request was refused. It was not, therefore, for more than a century afterwards that the cause was renewed. In 1782, chiefly at the instance of the Princess Louise of France, who had become a Carmelite at St. Denis, the beatification of Madame Acarie was asked of Pius VI. by the Assembly of the French Clergy, and after the necessary evidence had been taken and sifted in the usual way, the Pope granted the Brief of Beatification in 1791.[2]

In the dreadful year of 1792, the body of Blessed Mary was taken out of its resting-place, with the intention of preserving it in safety in the midst of the desecrations of the Revolution; but the Directory ordered the leaden coffin to be opened, and the body buried in the cemetery at Nucourt. It was, happily, recovered for the nuns at Pontoise in 1822, and has ever since been, as it is now, the glory of that convent and town. In her historian's beautiful words: 'There, under the silken hangings and gilding

[2] Madame Acarie is therefore known in the Catholic Church as Blessed Mary of the Incarnation.

of a costly, spacious shrine, now rests in peace the venerated body of that holy woman; that body which was made ready by the hair-shirt, by much toil and labour of her hands, by patience, by long watches watered with her tears, and by many good works, for the glorious resurrection. That body which was so pure a temple of the Holy Ghost; that body in which penance and mortification filled up what is wanting to us all of the sufferings of Christ our Lord, and which shall for ever bear about as its reward the marks of the Wounds of that Divine Redeemer.'